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LETTERS

Concerning the

Love of GOD,

Between the Author of the

Proposal to the LADIES

AND

Mr. *JOHN NORRIS:*

Wherein his late Discourse, shewing That it ought to be intire and exclusive of all other Loves, is further cleared and justified.

PUBLISHED

By J. NORRIS, M. A. Rector of *Bemerton* near *Sarum.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Samuel Manship* at the *Ship* near the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhil*, and *Richard Wilkin* at the *King's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1695.

Imprimatur,

October 7. 1694. *C. Alston*

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TO THE

Truly Honourable LADY,

The LADY

CATHERINE JONES,

IN DUE

Acknowledgment of her Merits,

AND IN

Teſtimony of that *Juſt*,

And therefore

Very *Great* and *Unfeigned*

VENERATION

Which is paid to her

Ladiſhips Vertues,

THESE

LETTERS

Are moſt Humbly

Dedicated and Preſented.

TO THE READER.

THE Letters here laid open to thy View are a late Correſpondence between my ſelf and a Gentlewoman, and to add to thy Wonder, a young Gentlewoman. Her Name I have not the Liberty to publiſh. For her Perſon, as her Modeſty will not ſuffer me to ſay much of her, ſo the preſent Productions of her Pen make it utterly needleſs to ſay any thing, unleſs it be by way of Prevention to obviate a Diffidence in ſome who from the ſurprizing Excellency of theſe Writings may be tempted to queſtion whether my Correſpondent be really a Woman or no. To whom my Anſwer is, that indeed I did not ſee her write

theſe Letters, but that I have all the moral and reaſonable Aſſurance that ſhe did write them, and is the true Author of them, that can be had in a thing of this Nature, And I hope my Credit may be good enough with thoſe that know me to be believed upon my ſerious Word, where there is no other Satisfaction to be given.

The Subject of this Correſpondence is the beſt and greateſt that the Thought of an intelligent Creature can poſſibly exerciſe it ſelf about, the Love of GOD. *And 'twere much to be wiſhed that this were made more the Subject not only of our Converſations and Letters (inſtead of thoſe many empty and impertinent Formalities that uſually fill and ingroſs them) but even of our Books and more elaborate Compoſures, which I think would be better imployed in laying good Foundations for the Love of GOD, and raiſing the low-ſunk Practice of it, that*

in curious Reſearches of his Nature, and an eternal Contention and tedious Chicane *about the* Trinity. *Men may wrangle for ever about theſe abſtruſe Theories, and ſooner diſpute themſelves out of Charity than into Truth, but our Wills have at preſent a larger Capacity than our Underſtandings, and our Love of GOD may be very flaming and ſeraphick, when after the greateſt Elevation and Soar of Thought our Conceptions of him are but faint and ſhadowy, and we ſee him but in a Glaſs darkly. But if we would even make this Glaſs more tranſparent, 'tis Love that muſt clarifie and refine it. An affectionate Senſe of GOD will diſcover more of him to us, than all the dry Study and Speculation of Scholaſtick Heads, the Fire of our Hearts will give the beſt and trueſt Light to our Eyes, and when all is done the* Love *of GOD is the beſt* Contemplation

However, I am ſure it is the beſt Practice. *Love is not only the ſhorteſt and moſt compendious Way to Perfection, but the greateſt Height and Pitch of it. The more we have of Love, the nearer Advances we make to GOD, who is Love it ſelf, and who breaths forth from him eſſential and ſubſtantial Love, the more fit we are to taſte the Sweetneſs of Divine Communion and religious walking with him here, and the better prepared to reliſh and enjoy the fuller Diſplay of his ſovereign Excellence hereafter.*

Heaven is but a State of the moſt perfect and conſummated Love, and therefore the beſt thing we can practice upon Earth is to tune our Hearts to this Divine Strain, to ſet them as high as we can, for ſure the beſt Preparation for Love muſt be Love it ſelf. But whatever other Qualifications are requiſite, a Heart once truly touched with

this

this divine Paſſion cannot long want them. Love will draw along after it all other Virtues, will perfect and improve them, and will at leaſt hide thoſe Faults of them which it cannot correct. For this is that univerſal Excellency which ſupplies the Defects of other Works, but which if wanting (ſuch a neceſſary and vital Part it is) nothing elſe can ſupply or compound for. Neither Tongues, nor Prophecy, nor Knowledge, nor Faith, nor Alms, nor even Martyrdom it ſelf ſignifie any thing without Charity. The Heart is the Sacrifice that GOD demands, and unleſs that be offered, the richeſt Oblation will find no Acceptance. Other Gifts and Graces, whether intellectual or moral, come indeed from Heaven, but they often leave us upon Earth. Love only elevates us up thither, and is able to unite us to God. 'Tis this indeed that gives us the ſtricteſt Union

on with him in this Life. By Faith we live upon GOD, by Obedience we live to him, but 'tis by Love alone that we live in him. And ſo St. John, God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God and God in him. *A Paſſage that makes highly for the Privilege of Love, and which I cannot mention without calling to mind a moſt Divine Remark which the* Port Royal, Abrege de la Morale des Epiſtres, *&c. Tom.* 4. *Pag.* 112. *in their late Abſtract of the Morality of the New Teſtament has upon it.* O great God, you are all Love in your ſelf, and all Love for Man and Man, dares deliberate whether he ſhould love you, and to inquire when and how far he is obliged to do it. If to love *GOD* be to poſſeſs him, and to be poſſeſſed by him, what an Emptineſs is there in that Heart which does not love God, or of what

what is it full if not of Vanity and Indigence it ſelf?

But I may be concerned to plead *as well as to* recommend *the Greatneſs of our Subject, which indeed is ſo ſublime and vaſt, has ſuch immenſe Dimenſions, ſuch Heighths and Depths in it, that there needs no other Apology than the Theme we treat of to excuſe the Defectiveneſs of our Meditations upon it. If there be any Argument that will oppreſs a Writer with its Weight, dazzle him with its Glory, and make every thing that he ſhall think or ſay upon it appear little, it is this certainly of the Love of God, which is a Theory of too exalted a Nature for any humane Pen, and ſuch as Angels alone are fit to write upon.*

They that contemplate the Face *of GOD can tell it may be in ſome Meaſure how lovely he is, and the very Tranſport of their high Paſſion, would furniſh*

niſh them with Expreſſion, but 'tis hard for a Soul that ſees only his Back-parts *to give any tolerable Repreſentation of his Beauty, and for a Spirit that dwells and converſes upon Earth to ſpeak the Language of Heaven. There are* Myſteries *in the Love of God as well as in other Parts of Religion which to the Minds of Men armed as they are with ſenſible Prejudices, will appear very difficult, and which the moſt purged and illuminated Spirits will not preſently comprehend, and which even thoſe that do will not eaſily explain ſo as to make them intelligible to others. Practice and Experiment will go furtheſt here, but after all we muſt be often forced to cry,* O the Depth! *St.* Paul *ſeems to have been ſenſible of this when he prayed for his* Epheſians, *that* being rooted and grounded in Love, they might be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth and

Length

Length and Depth and Heighth, and to know the Love of Chriſt which paſſes Knowledge. *This perhaps may be chiefly meant of the Love of God to us, but 'tis as true of our Love to him, which has its Dimenſions too, a Depth which we can hardly ſound, and a Heighth which we can hardly reach.*

Some it may be will be ready to ſay here that we have reached beyond it, by carrying the Meaſures of Divine Love to too great a Heighth. But let me only deſire them to conſider (beſides what they will find for the Juſtification of our Meaſure in the following Papers) that the Love here diſcourſed of and recommended is the Love of a God, *that is, of all that is good, of all that is perfect, of all that is lovely, of all that is deſirable, in ſhort, of all that truly is, and can any Love be too great or too high for ſuch an Object? Or rather does he not*

de-

deſerve infinitely more than we or any of his Creatures can beſtow upon him? What can an infinite good be loved too much, or is any Degree of Love too high for him who is infinitely lovely, and who infinitely loves himſelf? Is the Heart of Man too great a Sacrifice for a God, though it were intirely offered and wholly burnt and conſumed at his Altar? Eſpecially ſince he himſelf demands it all, requiring us to love him with our whole Heart, Soul, and Mind. And would we preſent him with leſs? What do we think the whole too great for him that we thus mince and divide it! But does not our Conſcience ſecretly reproach us when we do ſo? Yes, it continually upbraids to us the Love of Creatures, and is always like a faithful Advocate pleading in the Behalf of God, and aſſerting his ſovereign Right. And why then ſhould it be thought ſuch a Stretch of the Love of God to make it intire

tire and excluſive of all other Loves? Can we love God too much, or Creatures too little? Or is it ſuch a Paradox to make the Church ſpeak to Chriſt in the ſame Language wherein he condeſcendes to ſpeak to her, my Love, my undefiled is but one.

But after all, is this ſuch a rare and unheard of Concluſion that God ought to be the ſole and intire Object of our Love, to be ſo ſtared at as I find it is, and lookt upon as ſuch a Singularity! *No certainly, nothing more ordinary in Books of Piety and Devotion, than to meet with Expreſſions of this Kind.* St. Auſtin's *Devotional Tracts are full of them, and ſo are our modern Writers who commonly run upon the ſame Strain, as may be ſeen at large (for 'tis endleſs to make particular Quotations here) in all thoſe Books that are written after the myſtical and ſpiritual Way, particularly in the Works*

Works of the great Spaniſh Seraphick St. Thereſa, *eſpecially in her* Penſées Sur L'Amour de Dieu, *in* Cardinal Bona's via Compendii ad Deum, Chreſtien Interieur, Thomas a Kempis *of the Imitation of Chriſt, and the great* French Poet Corneille *in a Book of Divine Poems upon the ſame Subject, where he has this memorable Paſſage.*

O Qu' heureux eſt Celuy qui de Cœur & d' eſprit
Scait gouſter ce que C' eſt que d' aimer Jeſus Chriſt,
Et joindre à ceſt amour le mépris de ſoy-meſme !
O qu' heureux eſt Celuy qui ſe laiſſe Charmer
Aux Celeſtes attraits de ſa Beauté ſupréme,
Juſqu' à quitter tout ce qu' il aime
Pour un Dieu qu' il faut ſeul aimer.

Ce doux & ſaint Tyran de noſtre Affection
A de la jalouſie & de l' Ambition,
Il veut regner luy ſeul ſur tout noſtre Courage,
Il veut eſtre aimé ſeul, & ne ſçauroit Souffrir
Qu'autre amour que le Sien puiſſe entrer en partage,
Ny du Cœur qu' il prend en Oſtage,
Ny des Vœux qu' on luy doit offrir.

Mon-

Monſieur Jurieu *has alſo a great deal to the ſame Purpoſe in his Book of* Chriſtian Devotion, *and I might name ſeveral among our own Writers, but there is one that delivers himſelf ſo full and home to the Buſineſs that I need mention no more, but ſhall only preſent the Reader with a Paſſage out of him. It is* Biſhop Lake, *who in his ſeventh Sermon upon thoſe Words,* Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, *&c. Matth.* 22. *and* 37. *(the very Text we build upon) expreſſes himſelf thus;* In the Queſtion of Perfection Divines require a double Perfection, one partium, the other graduum. There is a Perfection of the Parts in Man, which muſt be ſeaſoned with the Vertue, and the Vertue in thoſe Parts muſt ariſe unto its full Pitch. This Text requires both theſe Perfections in Charity. The Perfecti-

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on of the Parts of Man are intimated in the Enumeration of the Heart, Mind, Soul and Strength, unto which all our inward and outward Abilities may be reduced. So that there is no Power or Part of Man that must not be qualified with the Love of God. But of this Perfection I have spoken when I shewed you the Seat of Love. I made it plain unto you that there was to be in our Charity a Perfection of Parts. That with which we have now to do is the Perfection of Degrees. The Text will tell us that it is not enough for every of those Parts to have the Love of God in them, they must also be wholly taken up therewith. And this Perfection is noted by the Word (all) which is added to Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength.

A Commandment is the sooner ad-

admitted if the Reaſonableneſs of the ground thereof be firſt diſcover-ed. I will therefore firſt diſcover the ground upon the Reaſonable-neſs whereof this great Meaſure is required. The ground is twofold, one in *GOD*, another in us. The ground that is found in God is taken from the Preface of this Text, as *Moſes* has delivered it, and St. *Mark* repeated it. The Preface is, hearken O *Iſrael*, the Lord thy God is one. But one, therefore the in-tire Object of our Love. He will not give this his Glory to any other, neither will he indure any Corſival herein. The Beginning, the Middle and the End of this Ob-ject is only he that is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the firſt and laſt. Had we many Lord Gods then might we have many Objects of our Love. The Object can no more be multi-

plied than he can. Take all the Parts of his Title aſunder, and you ſhall find Oneneſs and Intireneſs therein. *After a particular Examination of and Deſcant upon which he proceeds.* I ſuppoſe if you have well heeded what I have ſaid you will acknowledge that there is a fair ground in the Lord our God why he ſhould challenge all our Love. Let us come now and look upon our ſelves, and ſee what ground thereof we can find there.

When the Queſtion was moved unto Chriſt whether the *Jews* ought to pay Tribute to *Cæſar* or not, he called for the Coin and asked whoſe Image and Superſcription it bare. And when they anſwered him *Cæſar*'s, he replied, give unto *Cæſar* thoſe things which are *Cæſar*'s. But he addeth to our Purpoſe, that upon the ſame grounds they muſt give

give unto *GOD* thoſe things which are *GOD*'s. If the Image and Superſcription were a juſt ground why Coin ſhould be paid unto *Cæſar*, where *GOD*'s Image is found there is as good a Reaſon that that ſhould be rendred unto him. Now God's Image is found in us by Nature, for we were made according to his Image, ſo that all which we receive from him we owe unto him by the Law of Creation. A ſecond way is God's Image in us, by Grace. For our Regeneration is but a ſecond Creation, wherein we are reformed unto that Image according to which God at firſt created us. All then is due unto God a ſecond time, by the Law of our Redemption, ſo that whether we look upon our Heart, our Mind, our Soul, or Strength, it may be demanded of us, *Quid habes, quod non accepiſti?*

What haſt thou, &c. And if we have received it all, the Exaction is but reaſonable, *Si totum exigit a te qui totum fecit, refecit te.* Surely St. *Paul* thought ſo when he wills the *Corinthians* to glorifie God with their Bodies, and with their Souls, adding this reaſon, for they are God's.

Well then we have found fair grounds of this Meaſure. For if God be ſuch and ſuch to us, as you have heard, the only lovely thing, and all that can be beloved, and we are all his, and all that we have is due unto him, both by Nature and by Grace, then ought we with all to expreſs our Love towards him. But what is it to love him with all! Surely it is to love him *ſine diviſione & ſine remiſſione.* None of our Abilities muſt be divided, none of them muſt be ſlack in doing this Work. Firſt of the Diviſion, we muſt

muſt not divide our Hearts, that is, as the Scripture ſpeaks, have a Heart and a Heart, a Heart for God, and a Heart for the World, &c. *Again*, all Diviſion of our Abilities is a plain abandoning of the Love of God, for no Man can ſerve two Maſters as Chriſt tells us, &c. God will have all or none, &c. *Again ſays he*, What is the Uſe of all this but to make us ſee how little we perform of this Commandment, and how little Cauſe we have to boaſt of the beſt that we do therein. VVho is he that can deny that his Abilities are divided, and that he loves more things than God, yea moſt things more than God, &c.

You ſee here is a great Man that not only expreſly delivers the ſame Concluſion; but endeavours to prove it too. Whether his way of reaſoning be concluſive or no I leave the Reader to judge. All that I am at preſent concerned to re-

mark is, that the Concluſion it ſelf is far from being ſuch a Novelty or Singularity as many imagin and object. No, it is frequently to be met with, and all that I have here and elſewhere done is only to reduce a common Concluſion into clear and diſtinct Principles, ſuch as are founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things. So that if what I advance be no Truth, yet I am ſure it is no Paradox, which is enough to fence me from Prejudice, and I am content that Reaſon ſhould decide the reſt.

When I have deſired the Reader to be ſo juſt to me as not to meddle with theſe Papers till he has firſt carefully peruſed the Diſcourſe to which they relate, and which contains the Principle upon which they proceed, I have nothing more to ſay here unleſs it be to give ſome account of the Reaſons of our communicating a private Correſpondence to the Publick, concerning which I ſhall leave the Reader

der to ſatisfie himſelf out of the Two enſuing Letters, which contain my Propoſal of a Publication, with the Reaſon and Manner of my Correſpondents Compliance. The Letters are as follows.

Madam,

SInce we have now both of us concluded our Parts, and ſo ſealed up our Divine Subject with a double Seal, it would be a little indecorous to break it open again, eſpecially for me who cannot think it Prudence to travel on even in ſo pleaſant a Road after my Guide has left me, to proceed further in a Subject where you think fit to end, or to vitiate with any Additions of mine the Reliſh of an Argument upon which you have left ſuch a pleaſing and delicious Farewel. No Madam, let it ſtand as you have left it, for though it ſhould not be abſolutely finiſhed (as indeed who can ſay of ſuch an immenſe Subject that it ever is) yet 'tis moſt juſt and fit that where-ever you pleaſe to end, there ſhould be the Concluſion, after which, as in *Apelles's Venus*, there can be no adding

ding without Preſumption. I ſhall not therefore be guilty of it, only give me leave to lament a little that you conclude ſo ſoon your Meditations and my Pleaſures. For methinks I could eternally hear your Diſcourſe upon this ever fruitful, ever ingaging and entertaining Theme, which as great as it is receives ſuch an Advantage from your Management, as might recommend it to thoſe dull cold Spirits whom its own natural Excellency would never affect. The very Tunings and looſer Touches of a ſweet and well toned Inſtrument are pleaſant, and what then is the Harmony when it comes to be played on by a Maſterly Hand! And how is the muſical Hearer grieved when he ſees the melodious Artiſt unſtringing it and laying it aſide. But Madam, there are ſome Pleaſures that are always ſhort, if Time be their Meaſure, and were your Diſcourſes here never ſo prolix I ſhould ſtill think and be ready to complain they were done too ſoon, ſo great and noble is the Subject, and ſo admirable both your Thoughts and Expreſſions upon it, ſuch Choiceneſs of Matter, ſuch Weight of Senſe, ſuch Art and Order of Contri-

vance,

vance, ſuch Clearneſs and Strength of reaſoning, ſuch Beauty of Language, ſuch Addreſs of Style, ſuch bright and lively Images and Colours of things, and ſuch moving Strains of the moſt natural and powerful Oratory, and all this ſeaſoned with ſuch a Tincture of Piety, and ſeeming to come from a true inward vital Principle of the moſt ſincere and ſettled Devotion. But why do I ſay *ſeeming*, when 'tis next to impoſſible that ſuch lively and ſavoury Repreſentations of the Love of God ſhould proceed from one that is not intimately acquainted with the Myſteries and Secrets of it, or that there ſhould be any ſuch Knowledge without the moſt hearty and affectionate Senſe of it, which alone is able to teach and make it known. For, contrary to the Method of other Sciences, 'tis Practice here that begets Theory, and thoſe only who have their Hearts thoroughly warmed and animated with the Love of God can either know or deſcribe its Properties.

Madam, I am very ſenſible what Obligations I am under to you for the Privilege of your excellent Correſpondence, though I can never hope that my Thanks

ſhould

ſhould ever equal either the Pleaſure or the Advantage I have received by it, or that I ſhould be ever able to expreſs the Value I ſet upon your Letters, either as to their Ingenuity or their Piety. The former of which might make them an Entertainment for an Angel, and the latter ſufficient (if poſſible) to make a Saint of the blackeſt Devil. I am ſure for my own Part I have particular reaſon to thank you for them, having received great ſpiritual Comfort and Advantage by them, not only Heat but Light, intellectual as well as moral Improvement. For (as many Diſcourſes as there are upon the Subject) to my Knowledge I never met with any that have ſo inlightened my Mind, inlarged my Heart, ſo entered and took Poſſeſſion of my Spirit, and have had ſuch a general and commanding Influence over my whole Soul as theſe of yours. And I queſtion not but that they would have the ſame Effect upon other Readers if they were but expoſed to their View, and would help to fan and blow up that divine Fire which our Saviour came to kindle upon Earth, but which the Neglect of careleſs Men has let almoſt go out.

And

And indeed never was there more need of ſuch warm quickning Diſcourſes than in this cold frozen Age of ours, wherein the Flame of divine Love ſeems not only to burn with a blue expiring Light, but to hang looſe and hovering, juſt ready to fly away and be extinct. *Some have not the Knowledge of God*, was the Complaint of St. *Paul*, and the chief Character of his Time. But that of ours is Want of the Love of God, and which equally redounds to our *Shame*. Perhaps more, ſince the natural Capacity of our Wills is greater and more extenſive than that of our Underſtandings, and he that knows but little may yet love much. But to our Shame the Reverſe of this is now true. There is a great deal of Knowledge now adays and but little Love. Knowledge indeed is now in its Meridian, diffuſing at once a very bright and univerſal Light, but the Love of God is declining and juſt ready to ſet. Strange that our Heads ſhould be ſo full of Life and Spirits, and yet that the Pulſe of our Hearts ſhould beat ſo low! But the Ends of the World are come upon us, and a double Prophecy muſt be fulfilled, *viz.* That in the later

Days

Days Knowledge ſhall increaſe, and that the Love of many ſhall wax cold.

O divine Love whither art thou fled, or where art thou to be found? How little art thou underſtood, and how much leſs art thou conſidered and practiſed! What Diſcoveries of thee have been made by the Son of God, and yet what a Riddle art thou ſtill to the World! What a Divine Teacher haſt thou had, and yet how few are thy Diſciples! How charming and raviſhing are thy Pleaſures, and yet how very few haſt thou inamoured by them! While in the mean time Covetouſneſs and Ambition have their numerous Altars and Votaries, and ſenſual Love is continually ſpreading its Victories, and leading in triumph its inglorious Captives. O God that thou ſhouldſt be ſo infinitely lovely, and yet ſo little beloved! That ever Mortal Beauties ſhould be ſuffered to vye with thine, that thy Creatures ſhould fall in love with one another and in the mean time neglect thee, thou infinite, thou only fair, who alone art worthy to have, and who alone canſt reward their Paſſion? What a juſt Indignation muſt every true Lover of God conceive at this ſtrange Diſorder,

and

and how willing and ready will he be to help it by promoting and propagating as far as he can the Love of God in the World! For this is one great Effect and Sign of the Love of God (and the only one I would have added to those you have mentioned) that whereas the Lovers of created Beauties are jealous of them, and willing to ingross them to themselves, being conscious of their Incapacity to suffice for many, those that truly love God are desirous to have others love him too, to multiply his Votaries, and to make the whole World if they can, offer up their Sacrifices upon the same divine Altar. There cannot be a greater Pleasure to a true Lovers of God than to see him loved by others, nor a greater Grief than to think what vast Numbers of evil Spirits there are in Hell, and wicked Men upon Earth who either hate him or imperfectly love him. And what would not such a Soul do, what would she not suffer to gain Proselytes to the Love of God, and promote the Power and Interest of it in the World, that so God might be loved in Earth as he is in Heaven? And how would it rejoyce her to find her Endeavours succeed, to find

that

that by careful fanning and blowing, ſhe has at length lighted the Fire under the Sacrifice, and that by her zealous Endeavors it burns and conſumes, and ſends up to Heaven a grateful Fume? What Satisfaction would ſhe take, and how comfortably would ſhe warm her ſelf at the Fire which ſhe has kindled.

And truly Madam, I know no better Fuel wherewith to kindle and nourish this ſacred Fire than ſuch Diſcourſes as yours, which therefore I think are too uſeful to the Publick not to be due to it. Treaſures you know ought not to be concealed, and ſo great is the Diſorder when they are, that Ghoſts oftentimes think it worth while to come into our World on purpoſe to have them diſcloſed. To be plain and free, I do verily think nothing can be more conducive (next to the Breathings of the holy Spirit, and the Writings by him inſpired) to promote the Love of God, than your Divine Diſcourſes, nothing more effectual to inlarge its Empire in the Hearts of Men, which is ſo excellent an End, that I can hardly ſee how you can poſſibly diſpenſe with your ſelf from ſerving it when you have it ſo far in your power.

But

But I ſhall not aſſume to be your Caſuiſt. You know beſt what your Opportunities, and what your Obligations are. Only this, if you communicate your Letters you will be a general Benefactor to Mankind, who will be highly obliged to thank you, and which is more, to bleſs God on your Behalf. But if you deny the World ſo rich a Treaſure, all that I have to ſet againſt the publick Loſs will be my own greater Privilege, which however for the common Benefit would willingly be exchanged by

Madam,

Bemerton, July 24. *Your very humble Servant*

J. NORRIS.

Sir,

SInce 'tis your Pleaſure to cloſe this excellent Subject, that I might not with it put an End to thoſe great Advantages which ſuch an agreeable and inſtructive Correſpondence affords me, I

deſigned (when I had taken notice of ſome few incidentals in our former Letters) to propoſe a new Subject in this, or elſe to deſire you would pleaſe to make choice of ſuch an one as you ſhall judge of greateſt Uſefulneſs, but that in good Manners I think I am obliged to return an Anſwer to that Requeſt with which you conclude the old Subject before I introduce a new one. Perhaps by this time, and upon maturer Conſideration, you have altered your Deſire, which I ſhould be glad of for your ſake, leſt the World which ſo juſtly values your Judgment in other things, ſhould have too much occaſion to decry it in this. I am not ignorant that Perſons who have a great deal of Worth themſelves, are too apt to over rate the leaſt Appearances of it in others, and give ſuch Characters of their Friends as better expreſs what they would have them be, than what they really are. It being the Property of thoſe only who are diffident of their own Merit, to envy and endeavour to leſſen their Neighbours, and becauſe *they* are little, imagine that others are ſo, whilſt thoſe who have noble Souls themſelves, form their Ideas of others according to their own

own worth: And thus it comes that you paſs ſo undeſerved a Character on my Letters, concerning which I believe very few will be of your Mind. Is the World do you think ſuch an equitable Cenſor that I ſhould care to make it my Confeſſor, and expoſe to its View Papers writ with the ſame Freedom with which I think? Many are the Faults I find in them my ſelf, though we are generally over partial to our own Productions. Like fond Parents we think our own Brood the faireſt, how diſagreeable ſoever they appear to diſintereſted Judges. What think you then will the *Beaux Eſprits* diſcover? How will it gratifie that which they call Wit, but is more truly ill Nature, to find ſo much Matter to work on? For truly Sir, when we expoſe our Meditations to the World, we give them a Right to judge, and we muſt either be content with the Judgment they paſs or keep our Thoughts at home. Charity and Wiſdom indeed would reſtrain them from that ungovernable Liberty they uſually take; they may cenſure ſo it be with Candor; judge equitably; ay, and paſs Sentence too, provided it be impartially. But though

'tis the Buſineſs of a true Critick to diſcover Beauties as well as Blemiſhes, and by a due ballancing of both, to paſs a ſound Judgment on the whole, ſuch Equity is not to be expected where ſo much Envy abounds, where every Man reckons another's Praiſes his Detraction, and never thinks his Fame will reach ſo high as when 'tis built on the Ruins of his Neighbours. A very prepoſterous Way in my Opinion, to get or encreaſe Reputation. For where is the Glory of excelling thoſe who have little or no Excellency in them? No, let them ſhine as bright as they can, and if then I can out-ſhine them, I have made ſome conſiderable Addition to my Character. The Cenſure therefore that abounds in the World is one Reaſon why I am againſt Printing. If a Body have no Worth, to what End ſhould they expoſe themſelves, and bring their Weakneſs to the Light? And if they have, Concealment is their wiſeſt Choice, ſince they ſhall be ſure to find more Envy than Encouragement? For it is the Cuſtom of the World when they behold a ſhining Virtue, to ſtrive rather to reduce it to their Level, than to raiſe to its exalted

Heighth.

Heighth. 'Tis odds whether ſuch a Man can benefit others, who are too oft reſolved not to be benefited by him, but he is certain to ſuffer himſelf. Every buſie finger will be pulling the Flie out of his Box of Ointment, not to advance but to leſſen its Price. If he be guilty of a little Miſtake or Inadvertency (and who is ſecure therefrom?) Charity ſhall never be called on to diſpoſe of it, but it ſhall be bandied about, heightened and aggravated, not only to his, but even to the Reproach of Wiſdom and Virtue it ſelf. Since then the Air is ſo unkind, let's keep our tender Plants beneath a Glaſs; 'tis enough that they lie open to the Obſervation and Influence of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and that when Occaſion ſerves, a Friend may be admitted to view and taſte them. Theſe and ſome other Conſiderations have recommended to me, my darling, my beloved *Obſcurity*, which I court and doat on above all Earthly Bleſſings, and am as ambitious to ſlide gently through the World, without ſo much as being ſeen or taken notice of in it, as others are to buſtle and make parade on its Theater. And therefore, though I deſire by all laudable means to

ſecure a *good*, I will moſt induſtriouſly ſhun a *great* Reputation. Not that I want Ambition, perhaps there is too much of that in my Temper, but becauſe I cannot endure to have my Glory and Reward foreſtalled, nor can be content ito receive my *Plaudit* from any but an nfallible Judge. 'Tis enough for me to *do* well, let who will take the Praiſe of doing it, there being in my Opinion no *Encomium* comparable to that which they ſhall one Day hear, who ſeek GOD's Glory and deſpiſe their own. And though I bear in me too much Allay to be apprehenſive of great Commendations; yet, to confeſs the Truth, I as little care for Cenſure, having not yet obtained that perfect Indifferency to publick Fame which I endeavour after, becauſe I ſuppoſe 'tis ſcarce poſſible to command our ſelves, and arrive at a true Generoſity of Temper, till we are perfectly mortified to Praiſe and Diſpraiſe as well as to other things.

But beſides this, me thinks the very Form of a Letter renders ſuch Compoſitions improper for publick view. Thoſe civilities which are but neceſſary, eſpecially when an Acquaintance is founding, will give

give the captious World occaſion to ſneer and laugh. It favours too much of *Montaigne*'s Affectation to trouble the World with ſuch Particularities of our Humour, and Infirmities as we may in private very laudably deſcend to, and which I remember make a Part of ſome of my Letters. Alas Sir, we are too prone to overrate our ſelves, and conſequently to value whatever relates to us on no other Account but becauſe it does ſo, but we muſt not expect to find People ſo complaiſant as to bear with this Temper, or perhaps, ſo civil as not to ridicule and expoſe it.

Theſe are my Reaſons againſt a Publication, I know not how they will weigh with you, for I muſt needs confeſs one of yours overballances them all; whatever People may ſay of Temptation, to do good ſeems to me the only irreſiſtible one. And indeed, could I be convinced any thing I have writ would ſerve the Ends of Piety, I ſhould deſpiſe the Cenſure of the wou'd-be-Criticks, and reckon, *that* would more than compenſate all other Inconveniencies. (And perhaps a little Cenſure is neceſſary to correct that Vanity your too good Opinion may

have raiſed in me, and which I deſire you would be leſs expreſſive of for the future. 'Tis enough for me to obtain the inward Eſteem of any vertuous and deſerving Perſon, the greateſt Kindneſs they can ſhew is to acquaint me with ſuch Faults as leſſen and obſtruct it.) But if thoſe excellent and elaborate Diſcourſes that are abroad, have ſo little Effect on the Generality of Mankind, how can I expect my crude Rapſodies ſhould have any? Pardon me that I expreſs ſo mean an Opinion of any thing you are pleaſed to commend, I would not do it in any other Caſe. But all Men will not ſee with your Eyes, whoſe Candor has bribed your Judgment, and I am obliged to you as *Homer* and *Virgil* are to their Commentators for diſcovering Beauties in them which they themſelves perhaps never ſo much as dreamt of. Have you indeed been affected with my Letters? 'Tis not through any Force of theirs but the Goodneſs of your own Temper. For Hearts ſo full of Love to GOD, like Tinder, catch at every Spark. But alas there is too much dry Wood in the World to expect that ſuch a languid Flame ſhould kindle it. Your Letters indeed

indeed would be extremely uſeful, and I think they are intire enough by themſelves, nor do they need a Foil; ſo that I cannot imagine to what Purpoſe mine will ſerve, unleſs it be to decoy thoſe to a Peruſal of them, who wanting Piety to read a Book for its Uſefulneſs, may probably have the Curioſity to inquire what can be the Product of a Womans Pen, and to excite a generous Emulation in my Sex, perſwade them to leave their inſignificant Purſuits for Employments worthy of them. For if one to whom Nature has not been over liberal, and who has found but little Aſſiſtance to ſurmount its Defects, by employing her Faculties the right way, and by a moderate Induſtry in it, is inabled to write tolerable Senſe, what may not they perform who enjoy all that Quickneſs of Parts and other Advantages which ſhe wants? And I heartily wiſh they would make the Experiment, ſo far am I from coveting the Fame of being ſingular, that 'tis my very great Trouble it ſhould be any bodies Wonder to meet with an ingenious Woman.

If therefore you over-rule me, and reſolve to have theſe Papers go abroad, it

ſhall

ſhall be on theſe Conditions; firſt, that you make no mention of my Name, no not ſo much as the initial Letters; and next, that you dedicate them to a Lady whom I ſhall name to you, or elſe give me leave to do it. For though none can be leſs fond of Dedications, or has ſo little Ambition to be known to thoſe who are called great; yet out of the Regard I owe to the glorious Author of all Perfection, I cannot but pay a very great Reſpect to one who ſo nearly reſembles him. And where can a Diſcourſe of the Love of GOD be more appoſitely preſented than to a Soul that conſtantly and brightly ſhines with theſe Celeſtial flames? One whom now we have duly ſtathe Meaſures, I may venture to ſay, I love with the greateſt Tenderneſs, for all muſt love her who have any Eſteem for unfeigned Goodneſs, who value an early Piety and eminent Vertue. All true Lovers of GOD being like excited Needles, which cleave not only to him their *Magnet*, but even to one another. A Lady, whom for the good of our Sex I would endeavour to deſcribe, were I capable to write the Character of a compleat and finiſhed Perſon; but it requires

quires a Soul as bright, as lovely, as refined as her Ladyſhips, to give an exact Deſcription of ſuch Perfections! A Lady who dedicates that Part of her Life intirely to her Maker's Service, which the generality think too ſhort to ſerve themſelves. Who in the Bloom of her Years, deſpiſing the Temptations of Birth and Beauty, and whatever may withdraw her from *Mary*'s noble Choice, has made ſuch Advances in Religion, that if ſhe hold on at this rate, ſhe'll quickly outſtrip our Theory, and oblige the World with what was never more wanted than now, an exact and living Tranſcript of Primitive Chriſtianity. So good ſhe is that even Envy it ſelf has never a *But* to interfere with her Praiſes, and though Women are not forward to commend one another, yet I never met with any that had ſeen or heard of her, who did not willingly pay their Eulogies to this admirable Perſon, and if Praiſe be due to any Mortal, doubtleſs ſhe may lay the greateſt Claim to it. But not to relie wholly on Report, I my ſelf have obſerved in her ſo much Sweetneſs and Modeſty, ſo free from the leaſt Tincture of Vanity, ſo inſenſible of that Worth which

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which all the World admires; ſuch a conſtant and regular Attendance on the publick Worſhip of GOD, Prayers and Sacraments; ſuch a ſerious, reverent and unaffected Devotion, ſo fervent and ſo prudent, ſo equally compoſed of Heat and Light, ſo removed from all Formality, and the Extremes of Coldneſs and Enthuſiaſme, as gave me a lively Idea of Apoſtolical Piety, and made me every Time I prayed by her, fancy my ſelf in the Neighbourhood of Seraphick Flames! But---my Expreſſions are too flat, my Colours too dead to draw ſuch a lovely Piece! Would to GOD we would all tranſcribe, not this imperfect Copy, but that incomparable Original ſhe daily gives us; that Ladies may be at laſt convinced that the Beauty of the Mind is the moſt charming Amiableneſs, becauſe moſt laſting and moſt divine, and that no Ornaments are ſo becoming to a Lady as the Robe of Righteouſneſs and the Jewels of Piety. I am,

Sir,

July 17, 1694. *Your much obliged Friend and Servant.*

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Poſtſcript to the Preface.

THo' Authorities go but a very little way with me in Queſtions whoſe Determinations depends upon Meaſures of Reaſon, yet finding that the great and general Objection that lies againſt the preſent Concluſion is the pretended Singularity of it, I think it convenient to ſet down a very ſignal Paſſage which (ſince the writing the Preface) I have met with in the late Continuation *des Eſſais de morale* Part 2. Tom. 1. Pag. 59, where upon that Text of St. *Peter, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims abſtain from fleſhly Luſts*, &c. the excellent Moraliſt has theſe Words, *But what is the Extent of theſe carnal Deſires which St.* Peter *forbids us? It is eaſie to mark it out. For all that which is not God is carnal according to the Scripture. becauſe it is a Conſequence of the Corruption of the Heart, which having ſeparated us from the Love of God has made the Soul willing to fill that Emptineſs which ſhe feels in her ſelf by the Poſſeſſion of Creatures. Whether theſe Objects are ſpiritual or Corporal, the Deſires which we have of them are always carnal in the Language of Scripture. For which reaſon it is that St.* Paul *puts Diſſentions and Emulations among the Works of the Fleſh. So that it is a no leſs carnal Luſt to deſire Glory and Reputation, and all that ſerves in order to it, than to deſire the Pleaſures of the Body, becauſe theſe Objects are no more our true good than the other. God does no more permit that we ſhould part our Love between him and Reputation, between him and the Affection of Men, than between him and ſea-*

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ſting and other Bodily Pleaſures. For 'tis always the Diviſion of a thing which was all due to him. 'Tis always a Debaſement of the Soul, which being made for Good ſtoops beneath and degrades her ſelf in being willing to enjoy a Creature either equal or inferiour to her ſelf. God is great enough to be the only and intire Object of our Heart, and 'tis to injure him to divide it, becauſe 'tis in effect to declare to him that he does not deſerve it all.

You ſee here is the Judgment of a whole Society of great Men, no leſs than the illuſtrious *Port Royal* of *France*, in as clear and expreſs Terms as can be to our purpoſe. 'Twere infinite to appeal to all thoſe Writers who have either directly aſſerted this Concluſion, or occaſionally let fall Expreſſions that favour and inſinuate it. There is hardly a Book of Morality or Devotion extant wherein Paſſages of this Nature are not to be found. I do not ſay there are many that offer to deduce this Concluſion from Principles, but that it is generally held, and upon all Occaſions alluded to and glanced at, which is enough to ſhew the irreſiſtible Prevalency of the Truth, and to skreen them from the prejudice and imputation of Novelty and Singularity, who undertake upon a rational Ground to clear and defend it.

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PAge 44. Line 7. dele *a*. l. 8. read *from enjoying Pleaſures that do very much out-weigh it, and is it ſelf an Occaſion and Medium to*. p. 49. l. 9. after *pretend* add *to*. p. 90. l. 6. f. *that* r. *than*. p. 180. l. 15. d. *that*. p. 192. l. 6. f. *the* r. *this*. p. 286. l. 5. r. *pleaſes*.

LET-

LETTERS

Philoſophical and Divine,

TO

Mr. *JOHN NORRIS*,

With his Anſwers.

LETTER I.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

THough ſome moroſe Gentlemen would perhaps remit me to the Diſtaff or the Kitchin, or at leaſt to the Glaſs and the Needle, the proper Employments as they fancy of a Womans Life; yet expecting better

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things from the more Equitable and ingenious Mr. *Norris*, who is not ſo narrow-Soul'd as to confine Learning to his own Sex, or to envy it in ours, I preſume to beg his Attention a little to the Impertinencies of a Womans Pen. And indeed Sir, there is ſome reaſon why I, though a Stranger, ſhould Addreſs to you for the Reſolution of my Doubts and Information of my Judgment, ſince you have increaſed my Natural Thirſt for Truth, and ſet me up for a *Virtuoſo*. For though I can't pretend to a Multitude of Books, Variety of Languages, the Advantages of Academical Education, or any Helps but what my own Curioſity afford; yet, *Thinking* is a Stock that no Rational Creature can want, if they know but how to uſe it; and this, as you have taught me, with Purity

rity and Prayer, (which I wiſh were as much practis'd as they are eaſie to practiſe) is the way and method to true Knowledge. But ſetting Preface and Apology aſide, the occaſion of giving you this trouble is this:

Reading the other day the Third Volume of your excellent Diſcourſes, as I do every thing you Write with great Pleaſure and no leſs Advantage; yet taking the liberty that I uſe with other Books, (and yours or no bodies will bear it,) to raiſe all the Objections that ever I can, and to make them undergo the ſevereſt Teſt my Thoughts can put 'em to before they paſs for currant, a difficulty aroſe which without your aſſiſtance I know not how to ſolve.

Methinks there is all the reaſon in the World to conclude, *That*

GOD is the only efficient Cauſe of all our Senſations; and you have made it as clear as the Day; and it is equally clear from the Letter of the Commandment, *That GOD is not only the Principal, but the* ſole Object *of our Love:* But the reaſon you aſſign for it, namely, *Becauſe he is the only efficient Cauſe of our Pleaſure*, ſeems not equally clear. For if we muſt Love nothing but what is Lovely, and nothing is Lovely but what is our Good, and nothing is our Good but what does us Good, and nothing does us Good but what cauſes Pleaſure in us; may we not by the ſame way of arguing ſay, That that which Cauſes Pain in us does not do us Good, (for nothing you ſay does us Good but what Cauſes Pleaſure) and therefore can't be our Good, and if not our Good then not Lovely,

Lovely, and conſequently not the proper, much leſs the only Object of our Love? Again, if the Author of our Pleaſure be upon that account the only Object of our Love, then by the ſame reaſon the Author of our Pain can't be the Object of our Love; and if both theſe Senſations be produced by the ſame Cauſe, then that Cauſe is at once the Object of our Love, and of our Averſion; for it is as natural to avoid and fly from Pain, as it is to follow and purſue Pleaſure?

So that if theſe Principles, *viz. That GOD is the Efficient Cauſe of our Senſations,* (Pain as well as Pleaſure) *and that he is the only Object of our Love*, be firm and true, as I believe they are; it will then follow, either that the being the Cauſe of our Pleaſure is not

the true and proper Reason why that Cause should be the Object of our Love, (for the Author of our Pain has as good a Title to our Love as the Author of our Pleasure;) Or else, if nothing be the Object of our Love but what does us Good, then something else does us Good besides what causes Pleasure? Or to speak more properly, the Cause of all our Sensations, Pain as well as Pleasure being the only Object of our Love, and nothing being Lovely but what does us Good, consequently, that which Causes Pain does us Good as well as that which Causes Pleasure; and therefore it can't be true, That nothing does us Good but what Causes Pleasure.

Perhaps I have express'd my self but crudely, yet I am persuaded I've said enough for one of your

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Quickneſs to find out either the ſtrength or weakneſs of this Objection. I ſhall not therefore trouble you any further, but to beg Pardon for this, and to wiſh you all imaginable Happineſs, (if it be not abſurd to wiſh Felicity to one who already poſſeſſes a Virtuous, Large and Contemplative Soul, and a quiet convenient Retirement, which is indeed all the Happineſs that can be had on this ſide Heaven) and to ſubſcribe my ſelf

Honoured Sir,

London, St. Matthew's day. 1693. Your great Admirer and moſt humble Servant.

LETTER II.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

THough in Civility to your Perſon, my Anſwer ought to have been more ſpeedy, yet conſidering the weight of your Letter, I think it cannot be well too ſlow, and I hope you will in Equity, allow me ſome time to recover my ſelf out of that wonder I was caſt into, to ſee ſuch a Letter from a Woman, beſides what was neceſſary to conſider the great and ſurpriſing Contents of it. I find you throughly comprehend the Argument of my Diſcourſe, in that you have pitch'd upon the only material Objection to which it is liable; which you have

have also press'd so well, and so very home, that I can't but greatly admire the Light and Penetration of your Spirit. One of your clear and exact thoughts might easily satisfie your self in any Difficulty that shall come in your way, as having brightness enough of your own to dispel any Cloud that may set upon the Face of Truth; but however, since you have condescended to apply your self to me for Satisfaction, I shall endeavour as well as I can to solve the Difficulty you propose.

I observe therefore first of all, that you grant the two main things contended for, *viz. That God is the only Efficient Cause of all our Sensations*; and that by the Letter of the Commandment, *GOD ought to be the Sole Object of our Love.* Only you say, that the Reason I assign

for

for it ſeems not equally Clear, by which I ſuppoſe you mean, that it does not ſeem to follow from God's being the only Cauſe of our Senſations, that he is the only Object of our Love; Or, that GOD is not therefore the only Object of our Love, becauſe he is the only Cauſe of our Senſations; that is in ſhort, you grant the things, but you queſtion the Connexion.

Now before I conſider the Objection you urge againſt it, give me leave to tell you that I think it very clear, That not Abſolute, but Relative Good is the Formal Object of our Love; that is, that we love a thing not as it is good in it ſelf, but as 'tis good to us; and conſequently, GOD is the Object of our Love, not as he is abſolutely, but as he is Relatively Good, as he is our Good, or Good

to

to us. For to Love GOD is to deſire him as our Good. I do not deny but that the Abſolute goodneſs of GOD, the Natural Perfection of his Eſſence, is alſo the true Object of our Love; but not as Abſolute, but as Relative; that is, not as 'tis a Perfection in him, but as the ſame may be a Perfection to us, as it makes us more happy by the Pleaſure that we take either in the Contemplation, or in the Fruition of ſo glorious and excellent a Being. So that the abſolute Perfection of GOD muſt become relative before it can be the Object of our Love.

Indeed, when in thinking upon GOD, we conſider nothing but an infinite Reality or Perfection, we are ready to acknowledg that Order requires we ſhould *eſteem* him infinitely. But from this a-

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lone we do not necessarily conclude that we should adore him, fear him, love him, &c. GOD considered only in himself, or without any Relation to us, does not excite those movements of the Soul which transport it to Good, or to the Cause of its Happiness. Nothing indeed is more clear, than that a Being infinitely Perfect, ought to be infinitely *Esteem'd*; and I am apt to believe, that there is no Spirit that can refuse *GOD* this speculative Devoir, as consisting only in a simple Judgment, which is not in our power to suspend when the Evidence is intire. So that even wicked Men, those who have no Religion, those who deny Providence, may be suppos'd voluntarily to render GOD this sort of Devoir. But then supposing withall, that *GOD* (how perfect and

and good ſoever in himſelf) does not at all intereſs or concern himſelf with us or our Affairs; and that he is not the true and immediate Cauſe of all the good which they enjoy, notwithſtanding the Notion they have of the Abſolute Perfection of *GOD*, they conſider him not as their good, and accordingly do not apply themſelves to the Love of him, but brutally follow the agreeable movements of their Paſſions. From all which it is is clear, that *GOD* is to be loved not for his Abſolute, but for his Relative goodneſs.

Now if it be true in the general, that Relative good is the Object of Love, and that *GOD* is to be lov'd as, and becauſe he is our *good*, then it will follow, that if *GOD* only be our *good*, or the Author of *good* to us, then *GOD* only

is

is to be lov'd by us. And so the other way, that if *GOD* only be to be lov'd by us, it must be, it can be upon no other account than as and because he only is our *good*, as being the only true Cause of our Pleasure. And I cannot imagine upon what other ground you can cast our Obligation to love *GOD* only, (which you grant to be the literal import of the Commandment) if not upon this, that he only is our *good*. For as the reason why we are to Love *GOD* at all, is because he is our *good*, so the reason why we are to Love him only (which supposition you grant) can be no other, but because he only is our *good*. And since he cannot be our only *good* any otherwise, than as he is the only true Cause of our Pleasure, it follows, that his being the only true Cause of

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our Pleaſure, is the true reaſon why he ought to be the only Object of our Love. This I think, is clear and evident, and therefore though I ſhould reſt here, as not being able to Anſwer all the Objections to the contrary, this ought not to be any prejudice to the Truth of what is maintain'd. For this I take to be a ſure Rule, that we are to ſtick to what we clearly ſee, notwithſtanding any Objection that may be brought againſt it, and not reject what is evident, for the ſake of what is obſcure, it being very poſſible for a Man to be in ſure and certain poſſeſſion of a Truth, though attended with ſome Difficulties which he knows not well how to ſolve. But let us ſee whether yours are of that Nature.

You

You ſay, if we muſt Love nothing but what is Lovely, and nothing be Lovely but what is our *good*, and nothing is our *good* but what does us *good*, and nothing does us *good* but what cauſes Pleaſure in us, may we not by the ſame way of arguing prove, that what cauſes Pain in us does not do us *good*, and therefore can't be our *good*; and if not our *good* then not Lovely, and conſequently is not the proper, much leſs the only Object of our Love? True, it is not ſo far as it cauſes Pain; for the cauſing of Pain as ſuch, can be no reaſon of Love. But I ſuppoſe your meaning is, whether we may not by the ſame way of arguing prove, that what cauſes Pain is not at all the Object of Love? To which I Anſwer, That if that which cauſes Pain does it in all reſpects after the ſame

same manner as it causes Pleasure, the causing of Pain will, for ought I can at present see to the contrary, be as good an Argument for its not being to be lov'd, as its causing Pleasure is for its being to be loved. But thus it is not in the present Supposition. Though I acknowledge Pain to be as truly the Effect of GOD as Pleasure (for I know not what else shou'd cause it) yet it is not after the same manner the Effect of GOD as Pleasure is. Pleasure is the natural, genuine and direct Effect of GOD, but Pain comes from him only indirectly and by Accident. For first, 'tis of the proper Nature of GOD to produce Pleasure, as consisting of such essential Excellencies and Perfections as will necessarily beatifie and make happy those Spirits, who are, by being in their true rational

Order, duly diſpos'd for the Enjoyment of him. But if this ſame excellent Nature occaſion Pain to other Spirits, this is only indirectly and by Accident, by reaſon of their Moral Indiſpoſition for ſo Sovereign a Good. Again, as 'tis thus in Reference to the Nature of GOD, ſo in Reference to his Will. GOD's antecedent and primary Deſign is the Happineſs of all his Creatures (for 'twas for this that he made them) but if any of them, in the event prove miſerable, 'tis wholly beſides his firſt Deſign, and only by a ſubſequent and ſecondary Will. Again, when GOD cauſes Pleaſure, 'tis becauſe he wills it for its ſelf, and naturally delights in it, as comporting with his primary Deſign which is the Happineſs of his Creatures; but when he cauſes Pain, 'tis not that he

he wills it from within, or for it ſelf (for ſo 'tis not at all lovely) but only from without, and for the ſake of ſomething elſe as it is neceſſary to the Order of his Juſtice. For you are to conſider, that if there had been no Sin, there wou'd never have been ſuch a thing as Pain, which is a plain Argument that GOD wills our Pleaſure as we are Creatures, and our Pain only as we are Sinners. But now in meaſuring our Devoirs to *GOD*, we are not to conſider how he ſtands affected to us as ſinners, but how he ſtands affected to us as Creatures, how he is diſpoſed towards us as we are *his* Work, and not as we have made our ſelves. And therefore if as Creatures he Loves us, and Wills our Happineſs, that lays a ſufficient Foundation for our Love to him; and 'tis not his

treating us with Evil as ſinners that can overturn it.

Indeed if *GOD* had deſigned us for miſery, and inflicted it upon us as Creatures, if this had been his primary and direct Intention, his Natural and Original Will, according to the ſyſteme of thoſe who ſay, *That GOD made Man on purpoſe to Damn them*, then indeed I ſee nothing that ſhould hinder your Objection from taking place, *GOD* would not then be the proper, much leſs (as you ſay) the only Object of our Love, at leaſt as to thoſe miſerable Wretches ſo deſtin'd to Ruin, which by the way is to me a Demonſtration of the falſhood of that ſtrange Hypotheſis. But upon the ſuppoſition, that *GOD* wills and cauſes Pleaſure in us as Creatures, and puts us to Pain only as Sinners, there will

will not be the ſame reaſon for our not loving him upon the account of his being the Author of our Pain, as for our loving him as the Author of our Pleaſure and Happineſs. For we ſtand obliged to *GOD* as we are Creatures, and if in that Relation *GOD* be our Benefactor, and the Author of our *good*, he has a ſufficient Right; and, if the only Author, the only Right to our Love, though as ſinners he puts us to pain, which being thus will'd and effected by *GOD* after a manner ſo different from our *pleaſure*, cannot ſo well conclude for our not loving him, as this does for our loving him. Which may ſerve to take off the force of your firſt Inſtance.

And will be equally applicable to your ſecond. For whereas you further urge, that if both theſe

Senſations, (*viz. Pleaſure* and *Pain*) be produced by the ſame *Cauſe*, then that Cauſe is at once the Object of our Love and of our Averſion: I anſwer by the ſame Diſtinction, that if both theſe Senſations were to be produc'd by the ſame *Cauſe*, acting alike in the one as in the other, it would be as you ſay. But ſince it is otherwiſe as I have repreſented it, all that you can argue from *GOD*'s being the Author of our *Pain* as well as *Pleaſure* will be this, That he is juſtly to be the Object of our Fear, but not of our Averſion. We are indeed to Fear him, and him only, as being the *true Cauſe* of all *Pain*, and only able to make us miſerable, according to that of our Saviour, *I will forewarn you whom ye ſhall fear, &c.* But this is no reaſon why we ſhould hate him,

as

as never inflicting it but when Order and Juſtice require it. And if he did not inflict it then he would be leſs perfect, and conſequently leſs amiable in the view of all regular and well-order'd Spirits. I ſhall not determine any thing concerning the Caſe of the Damn'd, whether that invincible Love which they have for Happineſs may not inſpire them with an invincible hatred againſt him who is the Cauſe of their Miſery. Perhaps it may be ſo. Though whether it ſhould be ſo, and whether they do not ſin Eternally in ſo doing is another Queſtion. But I ſhall determine nothing here, thinking it ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe, that this is no reaſon why *GOD* ſhould be the Object of any Mans Averſion in this Life, whom as the Author of Pain we are indeed

to Fear, but not to Hate, for the reaſons before alledged.

Now as to your laſt Inſtance, That if theſe Principles, *viz. That GOD is the Efficient Cauſe of our Senſations, Pain as well as Pleaſure*, and that he is to be the *only Object of our Love*, be firm and true, it will then follow, either that the being the Cauſe of our Pleaſure (the doing us good you ſhould ſay to make a right Antitheſis) is not the true and proper reaſon why that *Cauſe* ſhould be the Object of our Love, or elſe if it be, then ſomething elſe does us Good beſides that which cauſes our Pleaſure; or as you otherwiſe word it, That which cauſes Pain does us good as well as that which produces Pleaſure, I think neither of theſe Conſequences need be admitted. Not the Firſt, becauſe I have ſhewn you, That God's being

ing the Cauſe of our Pleaſure is a ſufficient and proper reaſon why he ſhould be the Object of our Love, notwithſtanding that Pain which is alſo, but after a different manner caus'd by him. As to what you ſuggeſt to the contrary, namely, That the Author of our Pain has as good a Title to our Love as the Author of our Pleaſure: 'Tis true, he that is the Author of our Pain has as good a Title to it as the Author of our Pleaſure, becauſe they are both one and the ſame; but not as he is the Author of our Pain. He has a Title to our Love not *for* that, but *notwithſtanding* that. 'Tis his being the cauſe of our Pleaſure that makes him the proper Object of our Love; which he is, notwithſtanding his being alſo the Author of Pain. But then ſay you, if his doing us good be the reaſon of his

his being the Object of our Love, then ſomething elſe does us good beſides that which cauſes our Pleaſure, namely Pain, the Cauſe of our Senſations, Pain as well as Pleaſure being the Object of our Love. I anſwer, Pain may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to do us good, as it may occaſion to us ſome good that exceeds its own proper Evil. But formally and directly it does not do us good, as not making us while actually under it, Happy but Miſerable. Nor is there need that upon our Suppoſition it ſhould, God being ſufficiently lovely to us as the Author of our *Pleaſure*, to which we need not add the advantage that may accrue by *Pain*, or ſuppoſe *Pain* to be in it ſelf as Beneficial as *Pleaſure*, 'tis enough if the Evil of the former does not fruſtrate the Obligation that ariſes from the good of the latter. As I have ſhewn you that it does not But

But after all Madam, there is one thing I muſt further offer to your Conſideration, *viz.* That your Objection, whatever force it may have, is not peculiarly levell'd againſt me, but lies equally againſt all thoſe who make the lovelineſs of God to conſiſt in his Relative Goodneſs, or in his being our Good, who I think are the moſt, at leaſt the moſt conſiderable. Thoſe of the common way ſay, God is to be lov'd becauſe he is our Good, or the Author of our Good; which Notion I think right, but only add to it, That he is the only Author of our Good, and therefore the only Object of our Love. In which Argument I ſuppoſe, theſe Men would not deny the Conſequence, (as being the ſame with their own) but only the minor Propoſition. But now if it be an Objection a-

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gainſt my Notion, That God is alſo the Author of Evil, then the ſame will no leſs conclude againſt the common way, proving as much that God ought not to be lov'd at all, as that he ought not to be lovd only. I ſay it proves one as well as the other, though I think if you will attend to what I have offer'd, you will find that it proves neither.

Madam, I have ſaid all that at preſent occurs to my Thoughts upon this occaſion, and I think as much as is neceſſary, and have now only to thank you for the great Favour of your Letter, aſſuring you that whenever you ſhall be pleas'd to do me that Honour again, you ſhall have a ſpeedier Anſwer from

Madam,

Bemerton, Oct. 13. 1693. Your very humble Servant

J. Norris.

Poſtſcript.

Poſtſcript.

ONE conſideration more. When you ſpeak of *GOD*'s being the cauſe of Pain, either you mean as to this Life, or as to the next. If as to the next, that has nothing to do with the Duty that we owe him here. If as to the preſent Life, the pain that God inflicts upon us here is only Medicinal, and in order to our greater good, and conſequently from a Principle of Kindneſs. And I think, ſetting aſide my other Conſiderations, there will be no more pretence for not loving or hating God for this, than for hating our Phyſitian or Surgeon for putting us to pain in order to our Health or Cure.

LET-

LETTER III.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

YOU ſee how greedily I embrace the advantageous Offer you made me in the Cloſe of your excellent Letter; for which I would return ſome Acknowledgments, but that I want Expreſſions ſuitable to its Value and my Reſentments. Nor is there any thing in it from which I can with-hold my Aſſent, but that too favourable Opinion you ſeem to have conceiv'd of a Perſon who has nothing conſiderable in her but an honeſt Heart, and a Love to Truth. I am therefore exceeding glad to find this noble and neceſſary The-

Theory, *That God is the ſole Object of our Love*, ſo well eſtabliſh'd. And though any one of the three Principles you argue from in your Printed Diſcourſe is a ſufficient ground for that Concluſion; though it may be ſingly infer'd both from God's being the Author of our Love, and from the Obligation we are under of conforming to his Will, as well as from his being the true Cauſe of our Pleaſure, yet joyntly they are irrefragable; and I have nothing more left to wiſh, but that it were as eaſie to perſwade Men to fix the whole weight of their Deſire on their Maker, as it is to Demonſtrate that they ought to do it. For when all is ſaid, and all concluſions are tried, there is no reſt, no ſatisfaction for the Soul of Man but in her God; ſhe can never be at Eaſe nor in Pleaſure, but when ſhe moves with

with her full bent and inclination directly towards him, and absolutely and entirely depends on him. Yet I am very well pleas'd that I made the Objection which you have so well resolv'd, because it has procur'd me a clear and accurate account of what before I had only in confuse and indistinct Notion; and has begun a Correspondence, which if it may be continued I shall reckon the greatest advantage that can befall me. For though by observing the Rules, you have already enrich'd the World with I may possibly find out Truth, yet I can't be assur'd I've done so, being too apt to suspect my own Notions merely for being my own, but if they can pass so exact a Touchstone as your Judgment, I shall without hesitancy subscribe to them.

So

So far am I from thinking that GOD's being the Author of our Pain is any juſt Impediment to our entire Love of him, that I'm almoſt perſwaded to rank it among the Motives to it. For though Pain conſidered abſtractedly is not a Good, yet it *may* be ſo circumſtantiated, and always *is* when GOD inflicts it as to be a Good. To the pious Man it is ſo both intentionally and eventually; and though inflicted as a Puniſhment on wicked Men, it is however materially good, being (as you obſerve) an Act of GOD's Juſtice. And I think it is an unqueſtionable Maxim, that all our Good is wholly and abſolutely from GOD, and all our Evil purely and intirely from our ſelves. Whatever Methods GOD uſes to draw us to himſelf, I am fully perſwaded are

good in themſelves and good for us, being they proceed from infinite Goodneſs and tend towards it. And therefore ſince he has made us paſſible only for our good, and deſigned Pain as well as Pleaſure in order to our Happineſs, that by theſe two different Handles he might the better move and direct our Souls towards himſelf their true and only Felicity, I ſee no reaſon but to conclude that he is every whit as lovely when he produces Pain as when he cauſes Pleaſure.

For the Truth is, my Letter was principally deſigned in Favor of a Notion which I have entertain'd, (and which you further confirm me in by what you add in your Poſtſcript,) *viz.* That Afflictions, by which we uſually underſtand ſomething Painful, are not

are not Evil but *Good*, which at firſt ſeem'd to be contradicted by your Aſſertion, That nothing does us good but what cauſes Pleaſure, though upon ſecond thoughts I think they are conſiſtent enough. And if there be any ſhadow of a difference, I ſuppoſe it ariſes only from the equivocalneſs of the words *Pleaſure* and *Pain*, as in truth our miſtakes are chiefly owing to our encumbring one word with divers Idea's, moſt of the Controverſies that are in the World being (in my Opinion) rather about words than things.

By Pleaſure I ſuppoſe you mean in general, all thoſe grateful Senſations which Mankind is capable of; that is, all ſuch as are truly agreeable to his Nature: For I know not how it can conſiſt with the purity of the moſt holy *GOD*,

to ſay, he is the Author of thoſe pleaſing Senſations wicked Men do, or *pretend* to feel in what we call ſinful Pleaſures: ſo that we muſt either conclude, that *GOD* is not the Author of theſe irregular Senſations, or elſe that they are not Pleaſures. I am for the latter, and do indeed think it the greateſt nonſenſe in the World to call any thing that is ſinful pleaſant.

Pain you tell us, is nothing elſe but a diſagreeable Modification of the Soul, an uneaſie Thought occaſion'd by ſome outward Bodily Impreſſion. In which Definition there are two things conſiderable, the Bodily Impreſſion, and the uneaſie Thought that is conſequent thereunto. And when you ſay that *GOD* is the Author of Pain, I ſuppoſe you mean no more than that an uneaſie Thought is produc'd

duc'd in the Soul of Man by the Power and Will of *GOD*, at the preſence and by occaſion of that Impreſſion which ſenſible Objects make upon the Body. Now I ſuppoſe that this diſagreeable Modification is in the inferiour part of the Soul, that which is exercis'd about Objects of Senſe, and does not neceſſarily and directly affect the ſuperiour part, the Underſtanding and Will, and therefore is no real Evil to that which is properly the Man. And this I take to be the right Notion of Pain conſidered as a Senſation, and as *GOD* is the Author of it; but then I deny that in this ſenſe it is ſtrictly and properly an Evil.

Now as this Senſation which for diſtinction ſake I will beg leave to call *ſenſible* or Bodily Pain is occaſioned by ſome diſorder in the

parts of the Body, or elſe by the preſence of ſomething diſagreeable, or abſence of ſomething neceſſary to the well-being of the Bodily Frame. In like manner, when the Underſtanding and Will deviate from the Order and Perfection of their Nature, and are deſtitute of their proper good, they are as truly (and if they be in Health as ſenſibly) affected with Pain, as the Body is when it ſuffers the above-mentioned diſplacences. This I call *mental* Pain, and do reckon it the only proper Evil of a Man, both becauſe the Mind being the Man, nothing is truly and properly his Good or Evil, but as it reſpects his Mind; as alſo becauſe ſo long as he is under it, 'tis impoſſible for him to enjoy any degree of real Happineſs. For where there is a true Viral Principle, where the Soul

is not quite mortified, or at leaſt Paralytick and Diſeas'd, 'twill as certainly feel Pain when 'tis thruſt out of its Natural Order, and does not move towards *GOD* the true Term of its Motion, as its Body will when its Members are diſtorted; will be as ſenſibly affected with craving and unſatisfied deſires when deſtitute of the Grace of *GOD*, the proper aliment of the Soul, as that is with Hunger and Thirſt when in lack of its neceſſary Food; and will feel the ſame uneaſie chillneſs and darkneſs come upon it when deprived of the Light of *GOD*'s Countenance, that its inferiour part does when it wants the Sun's comfortable and enlightning Beams. And this I take to be the true meaning of what ſome People call Deſertion; pain and torment being as neceſſary to the Soul

when ſhe does not ſtand rightly affected to her *GOD*, as to the Body when under Sickneſs or outward Violence: And in proportion to the health of the Soul, and the fineneſs of its Complexion, ſo is the degree of its Pain when interrupted in its Motion towards him.

But can GOD in any ſenſe be ſaid to be the Author of this Pain? Hath he not taken all the Care that is conſiſtent with the Nature he hath given us to ſecure us from it? and has made all imaginable proviſion to prevent our falling into that diſorder which is neceſſarily attended with mental Pain; ſo that whenever we fall into it, 'tis purely owing to our own Folly? For though it be ſometimes ſaid that GOD does arbitrarily withdraw the chearing Beams of his Countenance,

tenance, which cannot but be uneaſie to us ſo long as we are under that Eclipſe, yet for my own part, I cannot think that he ever does it unleſs to quicken our Deſires and exerciſe our Graces; and then, ſince 'tis in order to our greater good, it cannot ſtrictly and abſolutely be call'd an Evil. Or elſe, 'tis the noiſom Vapours of our Sins that raiſe a Cloud between us and the Sun of Righteouſneſs, which being our own fault, we only are to be blam'd for it. Nor do I believe GOD ever denies his Grace to any but ſuch as have firſt wilfully, obſtinately and habitually refus'd it. So that in fine, mental Pain is neither more nor leſs than Sin, which I take to be the true and *only* Evil of a Man. For as nothing is good but GOD, ſo nothing is eſſentially evil but Sin, becauſe

cauſe nothing elſe is directly oppoſite to the Eſſence of Goodneſs. Since therefore GOD can in no manner of Way be ſaid to be the Author of Sin, he cannot be the Cauſe of mental Pain: And I know no Hypotheſis that does infer it except the Predeſtinarian, which for that Reaſon I look on as irrational and abſurd, and can ſcarce forbear giving it ſeverer Epithets.

The ſhort is, GOD is the Author of Pain conſidered as a Senſation, and ſo he is of all our Faculties and Powers; and as it proceeds from him it is *good*, deſignd to do us *good*, and therefore our *good*. But he is not the Author of *Pain* conſidered as an Evil, as ſuch it is purely and entirely owing to our ſelves; and ſince there is nothing truly and abſolutely the Object of the hatred of a Rational

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Creature but Sin, becauſe nothing but that is its true and proper Evil, conſequently GOD's being the Author of Pain can be no juſt bar to our Love, much leſs any motive to our Hatred or Averſion.

I conſider further, that though Man does naturally deſire *Pleaſure* in all his Capacities, and therefore Indolence is neceſſary to perfect Felicity, yet ſince there is no ſuch thing as perfect Happineſs or perfect Miſery in this World, that which has a greater degree of *good* than of *evil* in it, may properly enough be call'd a *good*; admitting therefore that ſenſible Pain is diſagreeable to the lower Faculties of the Soul, yet being it is deſigned by GOD to better and improve the Spirit of the Mind, and has a tendency to do good to our better part, if we our ſelves do not wilfully

fully obſtruct its operations, miſ-apply and abuſe thoſe opportunities it gives us, I ſee no reaſon but we may reckon it a *good*, and therefore Eligible. For though *Pain* (as you ſay) does not formally and directly do us a *good*, yet if it cannot hinder us of enjoying *Pleaſure*, methinks we have no juſt Cauſe to fly it as an Evil. For what though my Body ſuffer a little Hunger or Thirſt, or Cold, or the like, ſhall I put that petty inconveniency in competition with that moſt delicious *Pleaſure* my Mind does, or may at the ſame time enjoy in Acts of Love and Contemplation? Nay even with that *Pleaſure* which theſe very inconveniencies occaſion, the entire Reſignation of my Will to GOD, and the Joy that ariſes from that delightful Thought, that I am capable of ſuffering ſomething for his

his ſake, and in Conformity to his Will: And as it were but a bad bargain to gain the whole World by ſuffering the leaſt mulct or damage in our Souls, ſo I am perſwaded that the greateſt ſenſible Calamity, no not Death it ſelf, is worthy to be put in the ballance with the very leaſt ſpiritual advantage. For alas Sir, as you truly ſay, this World is a mere ſhew, a ſhadow, an emptineſs! ſo little Reaſon have our Pretenders to Wit to diſcredit every thing that is not the Object of Senſe, that in right eſtimate Spirits are the only Realities, and nothing does truly and properly occaſion good or evil to us but as it reſpects our Minds. And I believe on theſe Principles 'twere eaſie to demonſtrate that Martyrdom is the higheſt Pleaſure a rational Creature is capable of

of in this present State, a strange Paradox to the World! But I am confident none to Mr. *Norris*, who does not use to think after the vulgar rate.

But whilst I talk of Pain, I forget how much you suffer by this tedious Scribble. If I have said any thing to the purpose 'tis because I have your excellent *Letter* before me. Ordinary Writers I can penetrate at the first View, but every Period of yours dilates my Mind, calls it forth to pursue its reconcite Beauties in a Train of useful and delightful Thoughts. I have brought in my unwrought Ore to be refined and made currant by the Brightness of your Judgment, and shall reckon it a great Favour if you will give your self the Trouble to point out my Mistakes, it being my Ambition not to seem to be with-

without Fault, but if I can, really to be ſo, and I know no way more conducive to that end than the Advantage of ſuch an Inſtructor.

Permit me to add a Word or two more which is of greater Concernment to me becauſe of practical Conſideration; you have fully convinced me that GOD is the only proper Object of my Love, and I am ſenſible 'tis the higheſt Injuſtice to him and Unkindneſs to my ſelf to defraud him of the leaſt Part of my Heart; but I find it more eaſie to recognize his Right than to ſecure the Poſſeſſion. Though I often ſay in your Pathetick and Divine Words, *No, my fair Delight, I will never be drawn off from the Love of thee by the Charms of any of thy Creatures*, yet alas, *ſenſible* Beauty does too often preſs upon

on

on my Heart, whilſt *intelligible* is diſregarded. For having by Nature a ſtrong Propenſity to friendly Love, which I have all along encouraged as a good Diſpoſition to Vertue, and do ſtill think it ſo if it may be kept within the due Bounds of Benevolence. But having likewiſe thought till you taught me better, that I need not cut off all Deſire from the Creature, provided it were in Subordination to, and for the ſake of the Creator: I have contracted ſuch a Weakneſs, I will not ſay by Nature (for I believe Nature is often very unjuſtly blam'd for what is owing to *Will* and *Cuſtom*) but by voluntary Habit, that it is a very difficult thing for me to love at all, without ſomething of Deſire. Now I am loath to abandon all Thoughts of Friendſhip, both becauſe

cauſe it is one of the brighteſt Vertues, and becauſe I have the nobleſt Deſigns in it. Fain would I reſcue my Sex, or at leaſt as many of them as come within my little Sphere, from that Meanneſs of Spirit into which the Generality of 'em are ſunk, perſwade them to pretend ſome higher Excellency than a well-choſen Pettycoat, or a faſhionable Commode; and not wholly lay out their Time and Care in the Adornation of their Bodies, but beſtow a Part of it at leaſt in the Embelliſhment of their Minds, ſince inward Beauty will laſt when outward is decayed. But though I can ſay without boaſting that none ever loved more generouſly than I have done, yet perhaps never any met with more ungrateful Returns which I can attribute to nothing

ſo much as the Kindneſs of my beſt Friend, who ſaw how apt my Deſires were to ſtray from him, and therefore by theſe frequent Diſappointments would have me learn more Wiſdom that to let looſe my Heart to that which cannot ſatisfie. And though I have in ſome meaſure rectified this Fault, yet ſtill I find an agreeable Movement in my Soul towards her I love, and a Diſpleaſure and Pain when I meet with Unkindneſs, which is a ſtrong Indication of ſomewhat more than pure Benevolence; for there's no Reaſon that we ſhould be uneaſie becauſe others won't let us do them all the good we would. And though your Diſtinction be very ingenious, "That we may "ſeek Creatures *for* our good, but "not love them *as* our good, yet methinks 'tis too nice for common Practice;

Practice; and through the Deception of our Senses, and Hurry of our Passions, we shall be too apt to reckon that our good whose Absence we find uneasie to us: Be pleased therefore to oblige me with a Remedy for this Disorder, since what you have already writ has made a considerable Progress towards a Cure, but not quite perfected it. Thus you see Sir, what a Trouble you have brought upon your self by your obliging Condescentions to

Worthy Sir,

Your most humble

All-Saints Eve 1693. and thankful Servant.

LETTER IV.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

THE ſincere Love you ſeem to have for Truth, and the great Progreſs you have made in it, together with that ſingular Aptneſs of Genius that appears to be in you for further Attainments, makes me not only willing to enter into a Correſpondence with you, but even to congratulate my ſelf the Opportunity of ſo uncommon a Happineſs. For the better Improvement of which, and that our Correſpondence may be the more uſeful, I would deſire that it may be continually imployed upon ſerious and important Sub-

Subjects, ſuch as may deſerve the Time, and reward the Pains that ſhall be beſtowed on them, and may occaſion ſuch Thoughts and Reflections to paſs between us as may ſerve to give true Perfection and Inlargement to the Rational, and right Movements and Reliſhes to the Moral Part of our Natures. And (ſince I have taken upon me to preſcribe) I would have theſe Subjects well ſifted and examined as well as well choſen, that ſo we may not enter upon a new Argument till that which was firſt undertaken be throughly diſcharged, whereby we ſhall avoid a Fault very incident to common Converſation (wherein new Queſtions are ſtarted before the firſt is brought to an Iſſue) and which makes the Diſcourſings of the moſt intelligent Perſons turn to ſo little an account.

But this Fault ſo frequent and almoſt unavoidable in the beſt Companies, is eaſily remedied in Letters, and therefore ſince we are now fallen upon a noble and ſublime Subject, I deſire we may go to the Bottom of it, and not commence any new Matter till we have gone over all that is of material Conſideration in this of Divine Love.

So much by way of Propoſal, I proceed now to conſider the Contents of your preſent Letter, in which I find very great and extraordinary things, and ſuch as will deſerve more, and more ſtudied Reflections than my preſent Leiſure (I fear) will permit me to beſtow upon them. However I ſhall go as far as my Time and Paper will allow, and if you think I have any thing conſiderable omitted,

ted, the Defects of this ſhall be ſupplied in another Letter. I obſerve then that though you declare your ſelf ſatisfied with the Account I gave in my laſt why GOD's being the Author of Pain ſhould not ſtrike off that Obligation of Love which was grounded upon his being the Cauſe of the oppoſite Senſation of Pleaſure, yet (ſo greatly are you concerned to have that ill Conſequence effectually ſhut out) you advance another Hypotheſis for the Solution of the Difficulty. And becauſe it is very ingenious and worth our conſidering, I ſhall therefore firſt of all ſet down what by comparing the ſeveral Parts of your Letter together I take to be your Notion. Which when I have ſtated and conſidered, I ſhall reflect upon ſome ſingle Paſſages in your Letter that relate

to it. And in this you have the Model of the Anſwer that I intend.

To begin then with an Account of your Notion. You diſtinguiſh of two Sorts of Pain; that which is ſenſible or bodily, and that which is mental. By ſenſible Pain meaning that which is in the inferiour Part of the Soul, that which is exerciſed about Objects of Senſe; and by mental Pain that which affects the ſuperiour and intellectual Part. Now as for mental Pain, that you allow to be an Evil, and the only proper Evil of Man, but then you ſay GOD is not the Cauſe of that. And as for ſenſible or bodily Pain, that you allow GOD to be the Cauſe of. But then you ſay that is not truly and really an Evil, as not affecting what is properly the Man. And therefore though

GOD

GOD be the true Cauſe of Pian as well as Pleaſure, yet ſince the Pain which he cauſes is not of the firſt Sort, *viz.* mental Pain which is an Evil, but of the ſecond Sort, *viz.* ſenſible Pain which is not the proper Evil of the Man, this ought to be no Bar to our Love of him, much leſs a Reaſon of making him the Object of our Averſion. This I think is in ſhort your true Syſtem, which lying thus in a regular and compendious Draught may be the more diſtinctly conſidered, which is the Advantage I aim at by caſting it into this Form.

My firſt Remark upon this is that your Diſtinction of ſenſible and mental Pain in the general is right, and founded in the Nature of things. For certainly the Ideas of Joy and ſenſible Pleaſure, Grief and

and bodily Pain are very diſtinct. Some I know that pretend to Philoſophy confound theſe, making that Pleaſure or Pain (ſuppoſe) which a Man feels upon his drawing near the Fire to be all one with Joy or Grief. The Soul knowing (ſay they) or feeling that the Body which ſhe loves is well or ill diſpoſed, that there happens ſome good or ill to its mechanical Frame, either rejoyces or is grieved at it. The one is our Pain, the other our Pleaſure. But this I take to be groſs Philoſophy, though the Authors of it think it fine. It is true indeed, that as often as the Sentiments of Pleaſure or Pain do give us notice that our Bodies are well or ill diſpoſed, we are affected with Joy or Grief, but a little Reflection may help us to perceive that this Joy and Grief that are the

Conſe-

Conſequences of our knowing how 'tis with the State of our Bodies, differ exceedingly from thoſe antecedent Pains and Pleaſures whence the Information is receiv'd. For theſe prevent our Reaſon, whereas the other follow upon it. Pain anticipates all Thought or Reflection, but Grief ſuppoſes it and is grounded upon it. I grieve becauſe I know my ſelf to be in Pain, or becauſe I expect or fear it, whence it is evident that my Grief and my Pain are not one and the ſame, but two very different and diſtinct Sentiments. I therefore allow your Diſtinction, though I am not ſo well ſatisfied with the Ground of it. You ground your Diſtinction of mental and ſenſible Pain upon a double Part of the Soul, the ſuperiour and the inferiour. The Diſtinction

ction is authoriſed by Cuſtom, and (what is more) by you, but I muſt own to you ſincerely, that I do not underſtand it. I have heard much talk of this ſuperiour and inferiour Part of the Soul, and have thought much about it, but cannot for my Life form to my ſelf a clear Idea of any ſuch Parts. For beſides that I think the Soul has no Parts at all, if it had, ſure they are not ſuch diſſimular and heterogeneous Parts as ſuperiour and inferiour, intellectual and ſenſitive. The Soul I take to be an intire ſimple uniform Eſſence, Intellectual throughout, without any Parts at all, much leſs ſuch heterogeneous Parts. Nor is there any need that it ſhould be ſuppoſed to have any ſuch for the Eſtabliſhment of the preſent Diſtinction. The Diſtinction of Sen-

Sentiments does not need Diſtinction of Parts in the Soul. The ſame Eſſence of the Soul being variouſly modified may be variouſly affected, and be capable of different Sentiments. Being modified thus it ſhall be affected with Grief, and being modified thus it ſhall be affected with Pain, which will be ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from each other, by ſaying that Pain is a Modification of the Soul that anticipates and prevents all Reaſon and Reflection, and that Grief is a modification that follows it, and proceeds from it. Thus I chooſe to diſtinguiſh them, rather than by ſubjecting (as you) theſe two Senſations in two parts of the Soul, whereof I have no Idea; or by calling (as others) that Pain which the Soul ſuffers by the mediation of the Body, and that Grief which

which the ſame Soul ſuffers in and by her ſelf without the Mediation of the Body. For though according to the Law of this State Pain be always occaſioned by ſome Motion or Change in the Parts of the Body, yet ſince 'tis the Soul that truly feels it, and GOD that truly raiſes it, I can eaſily conceive, that GOD can, if he pleaſes, raiſe the Senſation of Pain in her though no Change be made in the Body, nay though ſhe had no body at all. That GOD for inſtance can raiſe the Senſation of Burning in the Soul without any Impreſſion of Fire upon her Body. Which by the way may ſerve to ſhew the Impertinency of that Queſtion among the School-men, how the Soul that is an immaterial Subſtance can ſuffer when ſeparate by by a material Fire? For let them

tell

tell me how Fire affects the Soul now ſhe is in the Body, and I'll tell them how it may torment it when out of the Body. But this by the by. The thing I directly intend is, that ſince the Soul may be capable of Pain as well without the Mediation of the Body as with it, this cannot be its Diſtinction from Grief that it affects the Soul by the Mediation of the Body.

But to go on, as I am not ſatisfied with the Ground of your Diſtinction, ſo neither am I with the Uſe and Application you make of it. Mental Pain ſay you is an Evil, but ſuch as GOD does not cauſe. Again, ſenſible Pain GOD does indeed cauſe, but then that is not properly the Evil of Man. Now I cannot accord with you in either of theſe. As to the firſt, I think it very certain that mental

Pain

Pain being a real Modification of the Soul is cauſed by GOD, who alone is able to new modifie our Souls, who only acts upon them and is able to make them happy or miſerable, as I have ſufficiently proved in my Diſcourſe of Divine Love, and as you will evidently perceive if you retire within your ſelf, and attentively conſult your Reaſon. And I wonder why you ſhould ſtick to allow GOD to be the Author of mental *Pain* or *Grief*, when you allow him to be the Cauſe of mental *Pleaſure* or *Joy*. If he be the Cauſe of our Happineſs, why cannot he be as well the Cauſe of our Miſery? And if of *Pain*, why not of *Grief*? For as to the other Part that ſenſible Pain which God cauſes, is not properly an Evil, you will find it very hard to perſwade any one that has

has felt it to this Paradox. That I ſuppoſe which perſwaded you to it was your diſtinguiſhing the Soul of Man into two Parts, a ſuperiour and an inferiour Part, the Latter of which being not properly the Man that Pain which is lodg'd there cannot be ſaid to be the proper Evil of Man. Thus the Stoicks reaſoned of old, and thus you now. But beſides, that this Diſtinction of the Soul into a ſuperiour and inferiour Part which is the Ground of this Suppoſition wants it ſelf a good Foundation. I further conſider, that if there were ſuch a thing as an inferiour Part of the Soul, yet ſince the higher is conſcious of and affected with what is tranſacted in the other, I do not ſee what Advantage accrues from this Diſtinction. And ſince 'tis the ſame Soul that

feels Pain and Grief, I ſee no Poſſibility of conceiving but that Pain muſt be as truly an Evil as Grief. And if 'twere put to my Choice, there are ſeveral Degrees of Grief that I would chuſe to indure rather than ſome Pains. And I would fain know whether Pain be not againſt the Happineſs of Man, or whether Happineſs can conſiſt with it. You your ſelf imply that it cannot, when you ſay that *Indolence is neceſſary to perfect Felicity.* And muſt not that then be an Evil that is contrary to Happineſs? And ſhould you not think your ſelf guilty of offending againſt that Charity which you owe to your Fellow-Creatures, and which obliges you to wiſh and ſeek their Welfare, if you ſhould put any of them without Cauſe to Bodily Pain? Or would you try to bring your

your ſelf off by your Diſtinction of the ſuperiour and inferiour Part of the Soul? That the Pain which you inflicted was only in the inferiour Part, which being not properly the Man you could not be ſaid to have done any real Evil to him, and ſo not to have treſpaſſed againſt Charity. I believe you have too much good Nature as well as Diſcernment to uſe ſuch a Plea as this: But now if Pain be not a proper and real Evil, how can it be againſt Charity to cauſe it in any one? For what but willing an Evil to a Man can be contrary to wiſhing well to him? It muſt therefore be concluded that ſenſible Pain is truly an Evil as well as mental, evil I mean in it ſelf formally and ſimply conſidered, and that it can become good only occaſionally and conſequentially, as

it may be a Means to avoid a greater Evil, or procure a greater Good (and ſo may mental Pain too) which when all is done I think the beſt Apology that can be offered for God's being the Author of it, and to ſalve him from being the Object of our Averſion upon that Account, *viz.* to ſay, that though ſenſible Pain be truly an Evil as well as mental, and that though *GOD* be the true Cauſe of both, yet *GOD* does not will our Pain as he does our Pleaſure and Happineſs, for it ſelf and as ſuch, but merely for the ſake of ſomething elſe, as it is a means to our greater good. And is therefore ſo far from meriting our Hatred for the Pain which he cauſes in us that he ought for that very reaſon to be loved by us, ſince 'tis for the ſake of Pleaſure that he cauſes Pain.

This

This I take to be the moſt ſatisfactory Account of the Difficulty, which as it reſolves into what I offered in my laſt ſo 'tis what you your ſelf think fit after all to take up with as your laſt Expedient toward the latter Part of your Letter, where indeed you deliver your ſelf very nobly upon this Occaſion.

Madam, I have now done with the Body of your Notion, and have now only to conſider ſome looſer Parts that relate to it. You ſay you think it an unqueſtionable Maxim that all our Good is wholly and abſolutely from *GOD*, and all our Evil purely and intirely from our ſelves. The former Part of this I abſolutely allow and contend for, concerning the latter I diſtinguiſh, when you ſay that all our Evil is purely and intirely from our ſelves, if you mean of

moral Evil I grant it, but if you mean of natural Evils then I muſt diſtinguiſh again upon the Words *from our ſelves*, which may ſignifie either a phyſical or moral, or if you will, an efficient or a meritorious Cauſality. We are certainly the meritorious Cauſes of all our natural Evils, as bringing them upon us by our Sins, but that we are the *efficient* Cauſes of any of them I deny. As all our good is wholly from *GOD*, ſo in this Senſe is alſo our evil. We have not the Power to modifie our own Souls, and can no more raiſe the Senſation of Pain in them than that of Pleaſure, *GOD* is the true Author of both, as I have elſewhere ſhewn.

You ſay again that Afflictions are not evil but good, to which I return that they are both in diffe-

rent

rent Reſpects. They are certainly evil in their own formal Nature, and ſimply in themſelves conſidered, and can be good only occaſionally or conſequentially, as they may ſerve as Means to ſome greater Good. And this I think may ſerve to reconcile the Goodneſs of Pain to that Aſſertion of mine, that *nothing does us good but what cauſes Pleaſure*, that is, either formally and directly, or occaſionally and conſequentially, ſome Way or other whatever does us good muſt be ſuppoſed to cauſe Pleaſure to us. Now though Pain cannot cauſe Pleaſure formally, as being a Senſation formally diſtinct from it, yet it may occaſionally and conſequentially, and ſo may come within the Incloſure of thoſe things that do us good.

You think fit to confine my Senſe of the Word (*Pleaſure*) to

ſuch only as are truly agreeable to the Nature of Man, by which I ſuppoſe you mean thoſe Pleaſures which are called rational and Intellectual. To this I reply that it ſeems to me very evident, and I think I have elſewhere made it ſo, that *GOD* is the true Cauſe of all the Pleaſure that is reſented by Man. But you ſay you know not how it can conſiſt with the Purity of the moſt holy *GOD* that he ſhould be the Author of thoſe pleaſing Senſations which wicked Men feel in what we call ſinful Pleaſures. But 'tis your Miſtake to ſuppoſe that ſenſual Pleaſures as ſuch are evil, or that there is any ſuch thing as a ſinful Pleaſure properly ſpeaking. As Sin cannot be formally pleaſant, ſo neither can Pleaſure be formally ſinful. All Pleaſure in it ſelf is ſimply good, as being

being a real Modification of the Soul, 'tis the circumſtantiating of it that is the Evil. And of this *GOD* is not the Cauſe, but the Sinner, who rather than forego ſuch an agreeable Senſation will enjoy it in ſuch a Manner and in ſuch Circumſtances as are not for his own or for the common Good, and therefore unlawful. But concerning this matter you may further ſatisfie your ſelf out of the Letters between Dr. *More* and *Me*, and by reading the firſt and ſecond Illuſtration M. *Malebranch* makes upon his *De la Recherche de la Verite.* Where he ſhews you that *GOD* does all that is real in the Motions of the Mind and in the Determinations of thoſe Motions, without being the Author of Sin.

There are two other Paſſages in your Letter which I know not how

to

to aſſent to till I better comprehend them. One is, that mental Pain is the ſame with Sin, the other is, that Sin is the only true Evil of Man. I cannot ſtay long upon theſe, but as to the firſt, beſides that Sin is an Act, and Pain a Paſſion of the Soul; and that Pain is a real Modification of our Spirit, whereas Sin in its Formality is not any thing poſitive but a mere Privation, I ſay beſides this, if mental Pain be the ſame with Sin, how ſhall we diſtinguiſh Sin from the Puniſhment of it? And how ſhall a Man repent for his Sin? For if mental Pain be the ſame with Sin, then to be ſorry for one Sin will be to commit another. Then as to the other Part that ſin is the only evil of Man, I grant it is the greateſt, but I cannot think it the only one; for beſides that

that mental Pain is as I have ſhewn an Evil diſtinct from it, there is alſo a thing call'd Bodily Pain, which I have alſo ſhewn to be an Evil.

Now Madam as to what you requeſt of me in the Concluſion of your Letter, if you think that diſtinction of mine of ſeeking Creatures *for* our good, but not loving them *as* our good too nice. I further illuſtrate it thus, you are to diſtinguiſh between the Movements of the Soul and thoſe of the Body, the Movements of the Soul ought not to tend but towards him who only is above her, and only able to act in her. But the Movements of the Body may be determined by thoſe Objects which environ it, and ſo by thoſe Movements we may unite our ſelves to thoſe things which are the natural or occaſional Cauſes of our Pleaſure. Thus becauſe we

we find Pleaſure from the Fire, this is Warrant enough to approach it by a Bodily Movement, but we muſt not therefore *love* it. For Love is a Movement of the Soul, and that we are to reſerve for him who is the true Cauſe of that Pleaſure which we reſent by Occaſion of the Fire, who as I have proved is no other than *GOD*. By which you may plainly perceive what 'tis I mean by ſaying that Creatures may be ſought *for* our good, but not loved *as* our Good. But after all I muſt needs acknowledge that this (as all our other Duties) is more intelligible than practicable, though to render it ſo I know no other Way than by long and conſtant Meditation to free our Minds of that early Prejudice that ſenſible Objects do act upon our Spirits, and are the Cauſes

ſes of our Senſations, carefully to diſtinguiſh between an efficient Cauſe ſtrictly ſo called, and an Occaſion, to attribute to GOD and the Creature their proper Parts in the Production of our Pleaſures, to bring our ſelves to a clear Perception and habitual Remembrance of this grand Truth, (the Foundation of all Morality) that GOD only is the true Cauſe of all our Good, which when fully convinced of we ſhall no longer queſtion whether he ought to be the only Object of our Love. *I am*,

Madam,

Bemerton, Nov. 13. 1693.

With great Reſpect,
Your humble Servant
J. NORRIS.

If you are ſatisfied thus far, I would deſire you to go on to communicate what other Thoughts you have concerning the Love of GOD, for 'tis a Subject I like, and would willingly purſue to the utmoſt.

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LETTER V.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

SO candid and condiſcending a Treatment of a Stranger, a Woman, and ſo inconſiderable an one as my ſelf, ſhews you to be as much above the Generality of the World in your Practice, as you are in your Theory and Speculation. Hitherto I have courted Truth with a kind of Romantick Paſſion, in ſpite of all Difficulties and Diſcouragements: for knowledge is thought ſo unneceſſary an Accompliſhment for a Woman, that few will give themſelves the Trouble to aſſiſt them in the Attainment of it. Not conſidering that

that the meliorating of one ſingle Soul is an Employment more worthy of a wiſe Man, than moſt of thoſe things to which Cuſtom appropriates the Name of Buſineſs and Affairs. But now, ſince you have ſo generouſly put into my Hand an Opportunity of obtaining what I ſo greedily long after, that I may make the beſt Improvement of ſo great an Advantage, I give up my ſelf entirely to your Conduct, ſo far as is conſiſtent with a rational not blind Obedience, bring a free and unprejudiced Mind to receive from your Hand ſuch Gravings and Impreſſions as ſhall ſeem moſt convenient, and though I can't engage for a prompt and comprehenſive Genius, yet I will for a docible Temper.

The Eſteem I have for thoſe neceſſary and uſeful Rules you have already

ready prescribed, shall appear by my strict Observation of them. For indeed the Span of Life is too short to be trifled away in unconcerning and unprofitable Matters; and that Soul who has any Sense of a better Life, can't chuse but desire that every Minute of her Time may be employed in the regulating of her Will with the most critical Exactness, and the extending her Understanding to its utmost Stretch, that so she may obtain the most enlarg'd Knowledge and ample Fruition of *GOD* her only Good, that her Nature is capable of. I will therefore pass on to explain a little what I asserted in my last, next add a few Thoughts concerning Divine Love, and in the last place a Proposal or two for the better Prosecution of those you have already made.

Now

Now in order to the firſt, I am very well ſatisfied that *GOD* is the Cauſe of Mental as well as Bodily Pain, if by mental Pain you underſtand Grief, my Miſtake lying in this, that I confounded Sin and mental Pain. 'Tis indeed evident that Sin and Grief are two diſtinct things; yet I cannot form to my ſelf any Idea of Sin which does not include in it the greateſt Pain and Miſery. For as *Sin* is the meritorious Cauſe of all Miſery, ſo it ſeems to me that the Puniſhment of *Sin* is concomitant to the Act; Miſery is inſeparable from *Sin*, and the *Sinner* is *ipſo facto* puniſhed. When therefore I ſaid that mental Pain is the ſame with *Sin*, I meant no more than this, that as a muſical Inſtrument, if it were capable of *Senſe* and Thought, wou'd be uneaſie and in

pain when harsh discordant Notes are plaid upon it, so Man, when he breaks the Law of his Nature and runs counter to those Motions his Maker has assign'd him, when he contradicts the Order and End of his Being must needs be in Pain and Misery. And as the Health and Perfection, Ease and Pleasure, Good and Happiness (or whatever you will call it) of a Creature consists in its Conformity to the End of its Creation, and the being in such Circumstances as are agreeable to its Nature, from which when in the least it deviates it loses both its Beauty and its Pleasure; so the Soul of Man being made on purpose for the Contemplation and Love of *GOD* whensoever it ceases to pursue that End, must needs be put out of the Order of its Nature, and consequently

ly depriv'd of all Pleasure and Perfection, whilst it stands rightly affected towards *GOD* it cannot be destitute of Pleasure, but whatsoever sets it in Opposition to him does by that Act deprive it of all Delight.

So that my Hypothesis will lie thus: That although *GOD* only has Power to modifie the Soul of Man, and to affect it with Pain and Grief, yet since these are rather *Uneasinesses* than Evils strictly so called (nothing according to my Notion being the proper Evil of Man but Sin, of which more anon) since they are design'd by *GOD* as Mediums to good, and are, if not formally, yet at least consequentially Occasions of Pleasure; since the wilful and affected Ignorance of the Understanding and Pravity of the Will, or in o-

ther Words Sin is the true and proper Evil of a Man, becauſe Sin only is abſolutely and directly oppoſite to the Eſſence of Goodneſs; and ſeeing *GOD* can no way be ſaid to be the Author of Sin, conſequently his being the Cauſe of our uneaſie Senſations, can be no juſt Bar to our Love, much leſs any Motive to our Averſion.

As for the Diſtinction of the Soul into inferiour and ſuperiour Part, I am as little ſatisfied with it as you can be, and do confeſs to you ingeniouſly that I have no clear Idea of that which is properly my ſelf, nor do I well know how to diſtinguiſh its Powers and Operations: For the uſual Accounts that are given of the Soul are very unſatisfactory, that in your Letter being the beſt I have met with and therefore for want of bet-

ter Expreſſions, I made uſe of this Diſtinction, which I did the more readily because I learned it from your *Chriſtian Bleſſedneſs*, P. 158. All the remaining Difference therefore lies in this Queſtion, *whether Sin be the only* Evil? And in order to the removing it, I ſhall firſt ſhew you my Deſign in affirming that it is, and then the Reaſons that incline me to it, and when I have done ſo I will refer all to your better Judgment.

Firſt, for what I aim at, I have obſerv'd that moſt of the Folly and Miſchief that is in the World proceeds from falſe Notions of Pain and Pleaſure, and Miſtakes concerning the Nature of good and evil. For would Men be perſwaded that GOD is their only good, ſo they might enjoy him they would not much regret the

Abſence of other things; neither would they ſo greedily purſue the Shell of Pleaſure, nor fix their Hearts on ſenſible Objects which can never ſatisfie. And were they but convinced that nothing is ſo evil as Sin, they would not *chooſe Iniquity rather than Affliction.* As therefore your Account of Pleaſure does rectifie the Errors of our Love, ſo I could wiſh that our Averſions were better regulated than they uſually are; and that Sin, which though it be not the *efficient*, is yet the *moral Cauſe* of all our Evils and Diſpleaſures, were ſo repreſented as that it might appear the only proper and adequate Object of our intire Hatred and Averſion. This is my Deſign.

Now for the Reaſons (beſides what are already intimated) which incline me to think that Sin is the only

only Evil. I grant that whatever is contrary to the Pleasure and Good of Man in any of his Capacities, may in some Sense be call'd an Evil, and in this Latitude no doubt but that both mental and sensible Pain are Evils. But because, when we speak of Evil we usually understand something that in its own Nature is the proper Object of our Aversion, evil as evil being no way eligible; and since mental and bodily Pain are not so far evil but that in some Circumstances they may become eligible, which yet they could not be without assuming the Nature of good, and therefore they are not pure and absolute Evils. And further, though 'tis easie in our Contemplations and Retirements to distinguish between greater and lesser Evils, to compare and weigh them

together, and to allot to each its due Proportion of Choice or Averſion, yet ſince good and evil do frequently preſent themſelves to our Minds in common Converſation and Buſineſs, when we have neither Time nor Appetite to abſtract and conſider, but are determin'd by this ſhort and obvious Silloginſm, "Evil is not eligible, but "ſuch a thing is Evil, therefore it "is not to be choſen: Whereas perhaps that which we refuſe as evil (ſuppoſe bodily or mental Pain) though formally, and in the greateſt Latitude of the Word it be an Evil, yet comparatively and *pro hic & nunc*, it may be a Good, and ſo the proper Object of our Choice. To avoid which common Occaſion of Miſtake, and becauſe the Nature of Man has ſo ſtrong an Averſion to every thing that bears the Name

Name of Evil, I wou'd rather call Grief and Pain *Uneaſineſſes* than Evils, and wholly appropriate the Name of Evil to Sin, which is * eſſentially and abſolutely Evil and the only entire Object of a rational Creatures Hatred and Averſion.

But not to contend about Words, admitting that Pain and Grief are Evils, it is but in a comparative and lower Senſe; if they were eſſentially Evil, they could not in ſome Circumſtances become good, which you your ſelf allow them to be *occaſionally* and *conſequentially*, and as they may be a Means to avoid a greater Evil. Whereas the very * Eſſence of Sin is evil, it

* The Reader is deſired to take Notice that no more is meant by theſe Phraſes, than that Sin in its own Nature or Formality is entirely evil, it has neither Form nor Beauty that we ſhould deſire it, can never be ordinable to a good End, is none of GOD's Creatures

Creatures, and therefore has not any the leaſt Degree of Goodneſs in it, is neither eligible for its own ſake, nor upon any other Account whatſoever.

can never in any Circumſtance be eligible, which is a Sign it is never good. We may not commit a leſſer Sin under Pretence to avoid a greater, but we *may*, nay we *ought* to endure the greateſt Pain and Grief rather than commit the leaſt ſin. For (not to diſpute what Good *GOD* may bring out of the Sins of Men, or how he does it, which are Queſtions I will not now meddle with) I have always thought that the leaſt moral Evil is not to be choſen, no not in order to the greateſt Good, as I think may be inferred from the Apoſtles arguing, *Rom.* 3. 8. there is a certain Peculiarity of Evil in Sin, which (though you will not allow it the only Evil, yet at leaſt) renders it an Evil paramont to all other Evils, and excludes it from the leaſt degree

of

of Eligibility. For though Pain and Grief put the Soul into uneaſie Circumſtances, yet they don't withdraw her from her true Good, they rather excite her more ſtrongly to cleave to him, and that Trouble which ſenſible things occaſion, and which ſhe feels through the Diſorder of her own Thoughts, ſtirs her up to fix more firmly on him, whoſe Comforts in this Caſe are her only Refreſhment, whereas Sin quite alienates the Soul from her only true Good, and thereby deprives her of the ſole Prop ſhe has to reſt on, and conſequently puts her in the moſt wretched, helpleſs and evil Condition. Every thing but Sin has ſomething of good in it, becauſe every thing elſe proceeds from *GOD*; but Sin is all over perfect Deformity, an uncompounded Evil, and a direct Con-

Contradiction to Order and Perfection, and conſequently to Pleaſure, and therefore is, or ought to be, ſet at the greateſt Oppoſition to the Nature of Man, and to be the proper Object of his intire Hatred and Averſion. This is the Point I drive at, and if it may be gained am very indifferent whether it be by mine, or ſome other Way of arguing.

But before I proceed to the next Particular I have two Requeſts, one is, That you would pleaſe to oblige me with a Definition of Pleaſure; and the other, That you would a little explain the Idea of Pain, for I don't well underſtand your Meaning when you ſay, *That Pain anticipates all Thought or Reflection*; I did ſuppoſe it to be an *uneaſie Thought*, and how then can it anticipate all Thought? The Bodily

dily Impreſſion indeed prevents Thought, but that is not properly the Pain but the Occaſion of it.

Now in the next place to gratifie your Deſire which falls in ſo much with my own Inclinations, *That I ſhould further communicate my Thoughts concerning divine Love*; a Subject on which 'tis eaſie to be endleſs, and yet impoſſible to ſay too much: I take it to be the Sum and Subſtance of all Religion, to which all other Duties are reducible, which are but ſo many different Modifications of this Soul that animates the Chriſtian Life: And therefore ſuch Diſcourſes as ſerve to lay its Foundation deep, and raiſe its ſuperſtructure high, ſuch as bring it Fuel by rational Motives, and fan its Flame by devout and reliſhing Expreſſions, do the Work of Religion all at once; for were this

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Divine Principle but once firmly rooted in our Hearts, and ſuffered to diſplay it ſelf in all its neceſſary Effects and Conſequences, 'twould ſupercede all other Inſtructions, and be inſtead of a Thouſand Monitors.

The Love of *GOD* is both the beſt Preſervative againſt Evil (in its greateſt Latitude) and the ſtrongeſt Impellent to good. Tis the beſt Antidote againſt Sin, in that it diſarms Temptations of all their Force, they cannot faſten upon the Soul that entirely loves its Maker. He who believes *GOD* to be his only Good, if he attend at all to that Conviction, can never wilfully ſin againſt him. For Sin being a Diſconformity to *GOD*, a willing ſomething contrary to his Nature and Will, 'tis not poſſible for a Man to chuſe that which he be-

believes to be contrary to his only Good, and which will therefore conſequently deprive him of it. And it being nothing elſe but the falſe Appearance of ſome ſeeming Good that inclines a Man to chuſe amiſs, he who conſiders *GOD* as his only Good, and loves him with an Entireneſs of Affection, has ſhut up all the Avenues of his Soul from that *Syren* apparent Good, and is not capable of being bewitch'd by it. Indeed if we allow the Creature to be in any degree our good, 'tis hard to keep our ſelves from deſiring it, and if we permit Deſire, we can never be ſecure from irregular Love, that Shame and Miſery of Mankind, it being eaſier not to deſire at all than to deſire with Moderation. For Love is an inſinuating Paſſion, and where-ever 'tis admitted, will

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ſpread and make its Way. And though the Charms of the Creature be infinitely unworthy to rival thoſe of the Creator, yet they have this Advantage, that they perpetually preſs upon the outward Man, and conſtantly preſent themſelves to our Senſes, ſo that if we allow them the leaſt Share in our Hearts, 'tis odds but that at laſt they wholly withdraw it from him who only has a Right to it.

And as the Love of *GOD* ſecures our Innocence, ſo it makes the beſt Proviſion for our Pleaſure. The Soul of Man may as well ceaſe to *be* as ceaſe to love; ſomething or other it muſt deſire, but ſo long as it moves towards the Creature, it may amuſe its Cravings but can never ſatisfie them. How often will the Objects of our Love be wanting? How often will

will the Objects of our Love be wanting? How often will they be unkind? And ſuppoſe them as preſent and as kind as we can wiſh them, ſhall we not be as ſick of our Fruitions as we were of our Deſires? For what is there in the Creature but Emptineſs, Vanity and Vexation? But the Object of Divine Love is always eſſentially preſent, nothing can hide him from us but our own Neglect; if we do but fix the Eyes of our Underſtanding on, and direct the Motions of our Will towards him, we may always contemplate and enjoy his Beauty; may always aſſwage our Thirſt at this Fountain, and feaſt our hungry Spuls upon his never-failing Charms, which though they will ſtill

draw us on to purſue a further Enjoyment, becauſe of their infinite Amability and Perfection, yet all along they will ſatisfie and fill our Souls with unſpeakable Delight; though they don't extinguiſh all Deſire, yet they will remove all Emptineſs, and at once repleniſh our Faculties and enlarge them! But theſe raviſhing Delights which the enamoured Soul feels in every Approach to her Divine Lover are better felt than expreſſed, and when we have once taſted of theſe moſt ſapid Pleaſures, we ſhall for ever diſdain the muddy Streams of ſenſual Delights!

Thus the Love of *GOD* defends us from the Uneaſineſs of Pain and Grief, as well as from the Evil of Sin, and makes us happy in all our Capacities.

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It is ſo Divine a Cordial, that the leaſt Drop of it is able to ſweeten and outweigh all the Troubles of this preſent State, and render the moſt Calamitous Condition not only *eaſie* but *joyous*. For it gives an Anticipation of thoſe Joys in which it will at laſt inveſt us, brings down Heaven into our Boſoms e're it carries us up thither; and were it but largely ſhed abroad in our Hearts, we ſhould be out of the Reach of Fortune, might ſlight and trample on all Afflictions. Though the Arrows of Pain and Grief ſhould ruffle our Skin, they could not touch our Hearts; or they might touch but could not hurt us!

Finally, to what Heights of Piety will not this Divine Principle elevate the amorous Soul!

For what can be too difficult to do to acquire a more perfect Enjoyment of what we love? What can be too hard to ſuffer for the ſake of that Object that hath won our Heart? 'Tis nothing elſe that cramps our Endeavours, and ſlackens our Induſtry after one of the brighteſt Crowns of Glory, but the dividing our Love between *G O D* and Mammon. If a fooliſh ill-grounded Paſſion can many times excite the Soul in which it dwells to do things beyond it ſelf, If the Love of dirty Clay, or popular Breath can reconcile us to Fatigues and Diſtreſſes, and many things very uneaſie to our Animal Nature, ſhall not the moſt rational and becoming Love, that Love which is the End and Perfection of our Beings, which is ſecured from Diſappoint-

pointment, Jealouſie, and all that long Train of Pain and Grief which attends Deſire when it moves towards the Creature, ſet us above all Difficulties, render our Obedience regular conſtant and vigorous, refine and ſublimate our Natures, and make us become Angels even whilſt we dwell on Earth?

In the laſt Place for the Propoſals I am to make. When you think we have ſufficiently examined the Subject we are upon, I deſire the Favour of you to furniſh me with ſuch a Syſtem of Principles as I may relie on, and to give me ſuch Rules as you judge moſt convenient to initiate a raw Diſciple in the Study of Philoſophy; leaſt for want of laying a good Foundation, I give you too much Trouble, by drawing Concluſions from falſe

Premiſes, and making uſe of improper Terms.

I have no more to add but my repeated Thanks for that great Condeſcention you continue to ſhew to

(Worthy Sir,)

December 12. 1693. Your moſt obliged

and humble Servant.

LET-

LETTER VI.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

IT deſerves neither your Thanks nor your Admiration that I ſhould endeavour to be particularly civil to a Perſon of your extraordinary Worth and Accompliſhments, which indeed appear ſo great and ſo beyond what I ever yet found or could imagine, as at the ſame time to command and leſſen the higheſt Reſpect and Deference that can be ſhewn to you. Your Hypotheſis, as you now explain and rectifie it, runs clear and unperplext, and has nothing in it but what equitably underſtood challenges my full Conſent and

Approbation. The Defect of it before lay partly in your ſuppoſing *GOD* not to be the Author of mental Pain (and that becauſe you made mental Pain to be all one with Sin) and partly in your ſuppoſing ſenſible Pain of which you allow'd *GOD* to be the Author, not to be in it ſelf a real Evil. But now both theſe Faults are mended, and all is right and as it ſhould be. For whereas before when you confounded mental Pain with Sin, you pleaded thus againſt our hating and for our loving *GOD* notwithſtanding the Pain which he is acknowledged to inflict upon us, mental Pain is truly an Evil, but ſuch as *GOD* does not cauſe, ſenſible Pain *GOD* does cauſe, but then that is not truly an Evil. Now diſtinguiſhing mental Pain from Sin, and ſubſtituting Sin in

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the room of mental Pain, you make your Apology for the Love of *GOD* run thus, Sin which is truly an Evil *GOD* does not cauſe, and as for mental and ſenſible Pains whereof *G O D* is the true Cauſe, they are not truly and properly Evils. By which latter Clauſe I preſume you mean not as you ſeem'd to do at firſt, that they are not truly and properly Evils in their own formal Natures and as ſimply in themſelves conſidered (for ſo 'tis evident that they are Evils, as being as ſuch againſt the Happineſs and Well-being of a thinking and ſelf-conſcious Nature) but only as in that particular Suppoſition, Juncture or Circumſtance wherein they are inflicted by *GOD*, who having a thorough comprehenſive View of our whole Condition, and ſo knowing what upon all Conſidera-

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tions is beſt for us, thinks it adviſeable ſometimes to moleſt and trouble our Repoſe with mental or ſenſible Pain, not for their own ſakes, or that he is delighted in them as ſuch any more than we our ſelves are, but in order to our Good, and as they are neceſſary Means to avoid ſome greater Evil. In which reſpect both Pain and Grief (though evil in their inward formal Natures) do relatively conſidered ſo far put on the Nature of Good as to be truly eligible, and would not fail to be actually willed and choſen by us for our ſelves, as by GOD for us, if we had the ſame Views and Proſpects of things that he has. In this Senſe it is very true and certain that both the mental and the ſenſible Pain which *GOD* inflicts in this Life (for as to the Miſery of the next I do not ap-

apprehend the preſent Queſtion concerned in it) are not, all things conſidered, truly and properly Evils, becauſe upon the whole they are eligible, which Sin can never be, it being a contradictory Suppoſition that that ſhould be eligible as a Means to avoid a greater Evil, which is it ſelf the greateſt of all. And herein I take it conſiſts the Peculiarity of the Evil of Sin, that it is never eligible, but always the due and juſt Object of our Hatred and Averſion. So that if in this Senſe you will have Sin to be the only Evil, that whereas all other Evils are not ſo far Evils but that in ſome Junctures and Suppoſitions they may become good and eligible, Sin as being the greateſt Evil can in no Suppoſition imaginable become good, but remains ever a fixed and unchangeable Evil,

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as GOD does a Good, without the leaſt Variation or Shadow of turning, I intirely conſent with you, and do and hope always ſhall think Sin to be thus the only Evil. And ſince GOD is not the Author of Sin which can never be eligible but only of our uneaſie Sentiments which in ſome Circumſtances may, and then are no longer to be conſidered as Evils, this gives clear and full Satisfaction to that Objection againſt the Love of GOD taken from his being the Cauſe of our painful Senſations. And I can now well conceive that GOD is always lovely and to be loved by us, not only when under the little common Uneaſineſſes of Life, but when moſt miſerable and afflicted, even by a Martyr in his Flames. And ſo we are come to a fair Reſolution of this Difficulty concerning the Love of GOD. As

As to what you ſay concerning the Inferiour and Superiour Part of the Soul, that you the rather us'd this Diſtinction becauſe you learnt it from my Chriſtian Bleſſedneſs, I confeſs that I do there make uſe of this Scheme of Speech, not intending thereby two parts of the Soul Really and Phyſically diſtinct, but only the ſame Soul diverſly conſider'd, with reſpect to different Objects and ways of Operation, In conſideration of which it is uſually divided into Parts in a popular way of ſpeaking, which in a popular Diſcourſe and where there was nothing of particular Theory depending upon it, I had no reaſon to depart from, but rather to comply with. But when Good or Evil, Grief or Pain come to be diſtinguiſhed by their being lodg'd in this or that part of the Soul

Soul in the Superiour or Inferiour Part (which muſt then ſignifie Parts really Diſtinct) I then deny that there are any ſuch Parts. In all other Caſes I ſhould not ſcruple to ſpeak in the common Language, not apprehending that I ſhould give any one thereby juſt occaſion to think that I held two real Parts in the Soul, any more than by uſing another popular mode of ſpeaking of the Vegetative, Senſitive, and Rational Soul in Man, that it was my real Opinion that he had three Souls.

I like your Ingenuity in confeſſing that you have no Clear Idea of that which is properly your ſelf, and I further tell you, that you never will have while you are in this State. We do not know our Souls here by any Idea of them, (as not ſeeing them yet in GOD) but

but only by Conſciouſneſs or interiour Sentiment, which is the reaſon that the Knowledge we have of them is ſo imperfect. We ſee Bodies by their Idea's, but we know no more of our Souls than what we feel to be done in them. I forbear enlarging upon this matter, though a very noble and uſeful point of Speculation, becauſe you may find a moſt excellent Account given of it by *M. Malebranche* in the 7th Chapter of his Third Book *de la recherche de la Verite*, page 352. And again more at large in his Illuſtration upon that Chapter, *page* 461. of *Amſterdam* Edition. And the ſame moſt excellent Perſon elſewhere, *viz.* in his *Meditations Chreſtiennes* of *Cologne* Edition, *page* 152, gives a very ſatisfying Account of the Reaſons why it has not pleaſed *GOD* to give us an Idea of

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our own Souls. The firſt of which is, that if we did ſee clearly what we are, we could not be ſo cloſely united to our Bodies as is neceſſary to the preſervation of this Animal Life. We ſhould not look upon it as a Part of our ſelves, and unhappy as we are at preſent, we ſhould not think it worth our Care to preſerve it, and conſequently having ſo little Value and Regard for it we ſhould have no Sacrifice to offer to GOD, &c. His other Reaſon he purſues more at large, and becauſe 'tis one of the loftieſt Strains of Reaſon and Eloquence that I ever met with, I ſhall give it you as near the Original as I can tranſlate it from the Author, who thus brings in the eternal Wiſdom, ſpeaking to her Diſciple. *Secondement parce que l'Idee d'une ame eſt un Object ſi grand, & ſi capable de*

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ravir les Eſprits de ſa beuatè, &c. Secondly, becauſe the Idea of a Soul is an Object ſo great and ſo apt to raviſh Spirits with its Beauty, that if thou hadſt an Idea of thy Soul, thou wouldſt be no longer able to think upon any thing elſe. For if the Idea of Extenſion which repreſents only Bodies, does ſo ſtrongly touch Natural Philoſophers and Mathematicians, that they oftentimes forget all their Duties to contemplate it. If a Mathematician has ſo much Delight when he compares Bigneſſes among themſelves thereby to diſcover their Relations that he often ſacrifices his Pleaſures and his Health to find out the Properties of a Line, what Application would not Men beſtow upon the Reſearch of the Properties of their own Being, and a Being infinitely more noble than Bodies? What Pleaſure would they not take to compare among themſelves by a clear View of the underſtand-

ing ſo many different Modifications the bare Sentiment of which, however feeble and confuſe, does ſo ſtrangely buſie and employ them. For thou muſt know that the Soul contains in her ſelf all the Beauties and Fineſſes that thou ſeeſt in the World, and which thou art wont to attribute to the Objects that environ thee. Thoſe Colours, thoſe Odours, thoſe Savours, with an Infinity of other Sentiments with which thou haſt not yet been touched, are no other than Modifications of thy own Subſtance. That Harmony which ſo elevates thee is not in the Air which ſtrikes thy Ear, and thoſe infinite Pleaſures of which the greateſt Voluptuaries have but a feeble Sentiment are included in the Capacity of thy Soul. Now if thou haſt a clear Idea of thy ſelf, if thou didſt ſee in me that Archetypal Spirit upon which thou waſt formed, thou wouldſt diſcover ſo many Beauties and ſo many Truths in

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contemplating it, that thou wouldſt neglect all thy Devoirs. Thou wouldſt diſcover with an Extremity of Joy that thou wouldſt be capable of enjoying an Infinity of Pleaſures. Thou wouldſt know clearly their Nature, thou wouldſt be inceſſantly comparing them among themſelves, and thou wouldſt diſcover Truths which would appear to thee ſo worthy of thy Application, that wholly wrapt up and abſorpt in the Contemplation of thy own Being, full of thy ſelf, of thy Grandeur, of thy Excellencies, and of thy Beauty thou wouldſt be no longer able to think of any thing beſides. But my Son, GOD has not made thee to think of nothing but thy ſelf. He has made thee for himſelf. *Wherefore I ſhall not diſcover to thee the Idea of thy Being, till that happy Time when the View of the very Eſſence of thy GOD ſhall deface and eclipſe all thy Beauties, and make thee deſpiſe all that thou art,*

that thou mayſt think only of contemplating him.

The Account of this excellent Perſon is ſo ſatisfying, that I ſhall not pretend to add any thing to it, but ſhall only obſerve from it that ſince 'tis ſo true that we have no Idea of our own Souls, and ſo reaſonable that we ſhould have none, it would be in vain to go about to define any of the Modifications of our Spirit, which (ſince we have no Idea of them,) muſt be learnt by inward Sentiment, and can no more be made known by Words to thoſe that have not felt them than Colours can be deſcribed to a Man that is blind. And therefore you muſt excuſe me if I own my ſelf unable to gratifie your Requeſt, in giving you a Definition of Pleaſure, which though I know when I feel it, and am able to diſtinguiſh from Light,

Light, or Colour, or Sound, or from the oppoſite Senſation of Pain, yet ſince I know it by internal Conſciouſneſs only or Sentiment, and not by Idea, I cannot by Words render it intelligible to any body elſe, but muſt remit him that deſires the Knowledge of its Nature to Senſe and Experience. For he can never know it till he feel it, and have thoſe Motions excited in the Organs of his Senſe, to which the Author of Nature has annexed this Senſation.

However I may venture to call Pain an *uneaſie Thought*, not that I intend thereby to define it (for I think it no more capable of a Definition ſtrictly ſo called than Pleaſure) but only to intimate in general that it is a Modification belonging to Spirit, and not to Body. For ſeeing clearly in the Idea which

I have of Extension, that all its Modifications reduce themselves to Figure and Motion, or certain Relations of Distance, I conclude that Pleasure and Pain and the rest of those Sensations which I feel in my self by interiour Sentiment, are not Modifications belonging to my Corporeal Substance, but to some other, which I call my Spirit. And for this reason it is that I call Pain an uneasie Thought. But then for the reconciling this with my saying that it anticipates and prevents all Thought, I need only suggest to you that when I call Pain an uneasie Thought, I take Thought in its utmost Latitude, for all that we are any way conscious of to our selves, as my most admired Philosopher does in his Principles of Philosophy *P.* 2. where he says, *Cogitationis nomine intelligo illa omnia*

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quæ nobis conſciis in nobis fiunt, quatenus eorum in nobis Conſcientia eſt. Atque ita non modo intelligere, velle, imaginare, ſed etiam ſentire idem eſt hic quod cogitare; i. e. *By the Name of Thought I underſtand all thoſe things which we are conſcious to be done in our ſelves, ſo far forth as there is in us a Conſcientiouſneſs of them. And thus not only to underſtand, to will, to imagine, but even to feel is the ſame here as to think.* But when I ſay that Pain anticipates all Thought, by Thought I mean all rational, diſcurſive and reflecting Thought, which 'tis moſt certain and evident by all Experience that Pain does prevent, and as certain that Grief does ſuppoſe, follow and proceed from it.

But to return from theſe Digreſſions (for I call all things ſo that have not an immediate Connection with Religion) to that which is

the principal Subject of our Correſpondence, and ought to be the Subject of all our Thoughts, the Love of *GOD*. Our Saviour places it in the Head of all Morality, telling us that it is the *firſt and great Commandment*. And his Apoſtle St. *Paul* places it in the Rear of it, telling us that *the End of the Commandment is Charity*. So then from both theſe put together the Reſult will be that the Love of *GOD* is both the firſt and the laſt, the Beginning and the End, the Foundation and the Top-work, the Principle and the Accompliſhment of all Moral Perfection. And no doubt but the firſt Devoir which in Order of Conception we can ſuppoſe to reſult from the Being of an intelligent Creature will be to love the Author of it, and if he who is the Auhor of our Being be alſo the

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Author of all the Good, Comfort, Pleaſure and Happineſs of our Being, nay even of our very Power and Force of loving, than as we begin with him ſo we muſt end with him too, and make him the Term and Object of our whole Love, uniting our ſelves to him with all that we are (as when Bodies touch one another according to their whole Superficies) with all our Heart, Soul and Mind. But of this already, and perhaps further hereafter. At preſent I conſider that ſince our Being is in it ſelf a Good, and the Foundation and Poſſibility of all the Good which we do or ſhall ever enjoy, it can be no ſooner received than it brings along with it an Obligation of loving our Creator, whoſe we are, and to whom we are to offer up our Hearts as a flaming Sacrifice as ſoon as we en-

enter upon Being, which we are to pay to him as our firſt Homage, and as an early Pledge and Earneſt of all the Duty that we owe him. And that which does the more oblige us to this is, that if we do not thus early pay it to our Creator, we ſhall pay it ſomewhere elſe where it is not due. For no ſooner does a Creature begin to be, but he begins to love, the intellectual Pulſe commences its Movement which the firſt Inſpiration of Life as well as the natural, and the Deſire of Happineſs immediately ſucceeds the Capacity of it. Aſſoon as we *are* we deſire to be happy, and aſſoon as we deſire to be happy we muſt ſeek for this Happineſs in ſome Object or other. If therefore we ſeek it not in *GOD*, we muſt ſeek it in the Creature. But if we ſeeek it out of *G O D*, we ſeek it where

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it is not, and we err and tranſgreſs in our Search, *GOD* only being our true Good. We are therefore obliged to ſeek Union with *GOD* aſſoon as we deſire to be happy, that is, aſſoon as we deſire at all, that is, aſſoon as we are. Our Obligation therefore to love *GOD* bears Date from the firſt Moment of our Exiſtence, and is therefore the firſt Duty that we owe him, as thus immediately reſulting from our having a Being. And thus is the Love of *GOD* the firſt Commandment, and has the Precedency in the Scale of Morality.

The other Character that our Saviour gives of it is, that 'tis alſo the Great Commandment. And the Scripture ſpeaks of its Dimenſions, adding one more than we attribute to Bodies, telling us of its Breadth and Length, and Depth

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and Height; but not how broad, nor how long, nor how deep, nor how high. And indeed with what Line could the Apoſtle meaſure ſuch an immenſe Vaſtneſs? How could he Paint Light and Flame, or put that into Words which paſſes not only all Deſcription, but even all Knowledg, and indeed every thing but Senſe and Experience. Well might our Saviour call it the Great Commandment. It is great in the Matter of it, being of the moſt weighty and concerning importance to the final Happineſs of Man. Great in the Obligation of it which is abſolutely indiſpenſable, it being not poſſible that *GOD* ſhould Create any one Spirit without obliging him to Love him, or that he ſhould ever diſcharge him from that Obligation. Great in the Equity and Reaſon of it, it be-

being highly reaſonable that we ſhould Love *GOD* who is ſo infinitely amiable, ſo altogether lovely. Great in the Power and Virtue of it, as being the moſt Fruitful and Prolifick Principle, the Root and Seed of all Excellency and Perfection, ſuch as draws on with it the Obſervation of all the Commandments, and is therefore the ſhorteſt Line, the moſt compendious way to *GOD* and the enjoyment of him. The Love of GOD is indeed the general ſeiſin, the univerſal ingredient of all a good Man's Actions; 'Tis that precious Tincture, that Chymical Spirit that runs through all, and that Noble Divine Elixir which gives Worth and Value to all, and converts even our meaneſt and moſt indifferent actions into Religion and Devotion. Great laſtly, in the

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Pleaſure and Duration of it. As Love is the moſt pleaſant Paſſion, ſo the Love of GOD is the moſt pleaſing Love. A Love that rewards it ſelf, a Fire that is its own Fuel. He that Loves GOD as he ought, as he cannot, ſo he need not Love any thing elſe, ſo great delight and entertainment will he find in the Love of GOD. Which will alſo go along with him into the other Life, and be the Life of that Life. Then all the inſtrumental and miniſterial Virtues ſhall expire and be of no further Uſe. *Whether they be Prophecies they ſhall fail*, &c. Even the Fear of GOD which is now ſo highly magnified as the Beginning of Wiſdom, ſhall then ceaſe, for perfect Love ſhall caſt it out. Faith ſhall vaniſh, Hope ſhall be ſwallowed up, and Prayer it ſelf ſhall be ſilent, only

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Love and Praiſe ſhall endure, and vie with each other to all Eternity. Thus much of the Love of GOD in general, concerning which all I have ſaid ſeems little when I compare it with the Greatneſs of the Subject, and your moſt exalted and ſeraphick Strains upon it. I intend in my next to add ſomething to the Reaſon of our loving GOD ſo intirely as I ſtate it in my Sermon. In the mean time I deliver up this noble Subject to a better Hand, deſiring you to communicate what further thoughts you have upon it, and to believe him that writes this to be in all Sincerity

Madam,

Bemerton, Jan. 11. 1693. Your moſt humble Servant

J. NORRIS.

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LETTER VII.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

I Am glad we are come to ſo good an iſſue in the matter of our Debate, and ſhall therefore immediately apply my ſelf to that moſt neceſſary and delightful Theme, which is the nobleſt entertainment of our Thoughts, the beſt improvement of our Minds at preſent, and will be the inexhauſtible Spring of our Joy hereafter, the Love of GOD. I cannot but admire the ſottiſhneſs of thoſe dull *Epicureans*, who make it their Buſineſs to hunt after Pleaſures as vain and unſatisfactory as their admirers are Childiſh and Unwiſe,

wise, and in the mean time turn their Backs on this vast Repository of solid and substantial Joy. A Joy whose perpetual Current always affords a fresh Delight, and yet every Drop of it so entertaining, that we might live upon it to all Eternity! Whilst our Souls are inebriated with its Pleasures, our very Bodies partake of its Sweetness: For it excites a grateful and easie Motion in the animal Spirits, and causes such an agreeable Movement of the Passions as comprehends all that Delight, abstracted from the Uneasiness which other Objects are apt to occasion. Our Passions (although they have both their Use and Pleasure, yet) as we usually feel them are blended with so much Pain, that 'tis hard to determine whether the good or evil they do us be the greater, and a Man

ſometimes over-pays for his Mirth, by that Sting of Sorrow which attends it. However, I am not for a *Stoical Apathy*, I would not have my Hands and Feet cut off leſt they ſhould ſometimes incommode me. The Fault is not in our Paſſions conſidered in themſelves, but in our voluntary Miſapplication and unſuitable Management of them. And if Love which is the leading and Maſter Paſſion were but once wiſely regulated, our Paſſions would be ſo far from rebelling againſt and diſquieting us, that on the contrary they would mightily facilitate the great Work we have to do, give Wings to this Earthly Body that preſſes down the Soul, and in a good Meaſure remove thoſe Impediments that hinder her from mounting to the Original and End of her Being. What is it that makes our

our Joys tumultuous and flitting, our Fears tormenting, our Hopes diſquieting, &c. but the Irregularity of our Deſire? If we love amiſs we ſhall both fear and hope, grieve and Rejoyce without Reaſon and in a wrong Meaſure, we ſhall laſh out into a thouſand Extravagancies, and be as unhappy as we are unwiſe and unreaſonable. Whereas if we tune our Love to the right Key, we need not be apprehenſive of Diſcord among the reſt of our Paſſions, all their Motions will be natural and regular, and all Concert in a becoming Harmony. The Divine Nature is a Field in which our grateful Paſſions may freely take their Range. If we make *GOD* the Object of our Deſire, our Hopes will neither delude, nor our Joys forſake us; there is no Serpent lurks in this

Graſs, all is calm and placid, ſecure and entertaining. And yet, unwiſe that we are! How hard is it to drive us to our Felicity, how difficult to convince us of our Happineſs? How many Evaſions do we find to with-hold our Love from him who requires it, not for his *own* but *our* Advantage! When ſhall we be, I need not ſay ſo juſt to *GOD*, but ſo kind to our ſelves, as totally to withdraw every ſtraggling Deſire from the Creature, the very beſt of which is not able to ſatisfie the Longings, and fill the Capacities of the Mind. The Boundleſſneſs of Deſire is a plain Indication to me that it was never made for the Creature; for what is there in the whole Compaſs of Nature that can ſatisfie Deſire? What but he who made it can repleniſh and content it? I need not

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bring Arguments for the Proof of this, every one has Experience enough to confirm it. For after all our Reſearches after that which is good for the Sons of Men, where is the happy Perſon who has not been defeated in his Hopes, or fruſtrated in his Enjoyments? Though he has obtained his Object, has he ſatisfied his Deſire? For how amiable ſoever created Good may appear at a Diſtance, a cloſer Inſpection and intimate Knowledge, declares it to be vain and empty, and a very improper Quarry for the Soul of Man.

Indeed the Soul of our Neighbour has the moſt plauſible Pretence to our Love, as being the moſt Godlike of all the Creatures, but ſince 'tis as indigent as our own, how can it ſupply our Wants, or conſequently be the proper Object of our

Deſires? And if you will forgive a Remark which perhaps is not ſo ſolid as the Subject requires, I am apt to think that that Baſhfulneſs and Unwillingneſs we feel in our ſelves to declare Love though never ſo pure and ſo refined from baſe and low Deſigns, and which ſhews it ſelf in moſt, but eſpecially in the beſt and moſt generous Tempers, proceeds from hence: The Soul bluſhes to declare her Indigence, and to go out of her ſelf to ſeek for Happineſs in that which *is not*, *cannot* be the proper Object of her Deſires. 'Tis true, a Siſter Soul may give ſomewhat better Entertainment to our Love than other Creatures can, but ſhe is not able to fill and content it. She muſt ſeek her own Felicity abroad, and if ſhe cannot be her own Good, there is little Reaſon to expect ſhe

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ſhould be ours. And being I have heard ſome Object againſt your Account of the firſt and great Commandment, *that it is prejudicial to the ſecond*, and becauſe I am of a quite contrary Opinion, and think nothing does more effectually ſecure and improve it, I will therefore offer to your Conſideration and Correction ſuch Meditations as I have had about it.

It were I confeſs a ſtrong Prejudice againſt your Way of ſtating the Love of *GOD*, if it were in any Meaſure injurious to the right Underſtanding and due Performance of the Love we owe to our Neighbour. For ſince the Precepts of the Goſpel are an exact and beautiful Syſtem of Wiſdom and Perfection, every one of whoſe Parts are ſo duly proportioned to the other, that the Reſult of all is per-

fect Harmony and Order, I muſt needs conclude, that when ſuch a Senſe is put upon one Precept as cauſes it to claſh and interfere with another, it can't be the genuine Meaning of it. And if I can't make over the whole of my Deſire to *GOD*, without defaulking from that Portion of Love he has aſſigned my Neighbour, I muſt of Neceſſity ſet the Signification of that Precept to a lower Pitch, and find out ſome other Medium to interpret the firſt and great Commandment. But there's no Neceſſity for this: So far is your Account of the Love of *GOD* from being prejudicial to the Love of our Neighbour that (if I think right) 'tis the only ſolid and ſure Foundation it can reſt upon. For if I may lawfully beſtow any Share of my Deſire on my Neighbour, why

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not on the reſt of *GOD*'s Creatures that are uſeful and beneficial to me, provided my Love be not inordinate, but contain it ſelf within thoſe Bounds that Reaſon and Religion have preſcribed? For thoſe who contend for a Love of Deſire towards our Neighbour, won't deny but that that Deſire may be inordinate, and in that Reſpect unlawful; and therefore, according to them, it is not the *bare* deſiring, but the *Exceſs* and *Irregularity* of that Deſire that makes it peccant. But does not Reaſon plead as much for the Lawfulneſs of deſiring one Creature as another? And what Arguments can be fetched from thence for the Love of our Neighbour, that will not be as concluding for the Love of other Creatures in their Degree and Proportion? If it be alledged

ledged that we have a Command to love our Neighbour, but none to love other Creatures, this ſeems to me a begging of the Queſtion, for the Matter in Debate is, *Whether that Command ought to be underſtood of Love of Deſire or Love of Benevolence.* But if we once permit our Deſire to ſtray after the Creature, we open a Bank to all that Miſchief, Malice and Uncharitableneſs that is in the World. And indeed, what can be ſo deſtructive to the Love of our Neighbour as theſe Deſires? For the Creature being finite and empty too, and therefore unable to ſatisfie the Deſire of a rational Soul, how is it poſſible but that a Multitude of Lovers who all deſire the ſame thing, which is very far from being able to ſatisfie one, much leſs all of them, ſhould croſs each

other

other in theſe Deſires and Purſuits, and conſequently deſtroy that Peace and mutual Benevolence which ought to be cheriſhed among rational Beings, and to which the Precepts of the Goſpel ſo ſtrictly engage us? But the Divine Nature is an inexhauſtible Ocean of Felicity, in which every one of us may ſatisfie his moſt inlarged Deſires, without the leaſt Diminution of its Fulneſs! We need not grudg nor envy each other's Portion, for here is enough for us all. And therefore the Soul that centres all her Love on *GOD*, has no Temptation to thoſe Sins that obſtruct her Benevolence to her Neighbour. She does not *make Gold her Hope, nor the fine Gold her Confidence*, and therefore can very readily part with it to ſupply her Brother's Neceſſities. She does not place her Felicity

city in the Pomps and Pleaſures of this Mortal Life, and therefore does neither envy him who poſſeſſes them, nor ſeeks by injurious Practiſes to deprive him of them. And as ſhe has no *Pleaſure*, no *coveting*, no *Ambition*, but to partake of the Divine Nature, ſo the Excellency of that Good on which ſhe feeds aſſimilates her into its own Likeneſs, and inſpires her with ſuch a generous and diffuſive Benignity, that ſhe is willing to ſpend and be ſpent for the good of others, and in Imitation of the Divine *Philanthropy*, expands her ſelf in Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence, as uncircumſcribedly and univerſally as the Capacity of her Nature will permit.

What has been ſaid I hope is ſufficient to authorize me without Suſpicion of Injuſtice, to with-

draw

draw my Heart from my Neighbour and fix it *entirely* on him who has Merit enough to deſerve, and Kindneſs enough to embrace and requite the higheſt and moſt arduous Degree of Love I can poſſibly beſtow on him. But it may further be conſidered, that our Saviour commands us to love our Neighbour *as our ſelves*, and to love one another *as he has loved us*. Now our Love to our ſelves is a Love of Benevolence, and conſequently ſuch a Love to our Neighbour does fully diſcharge the Obligation of that Command. Nor does it appear that our Saviour loved with a Love of Deſire, as he was *GOD* he *could* not, and as he was Man he *need* not, for a Love of Benevolence will anſwer all the Ends of his coming into the World. The Scripture 'tis true, mentions ſome

ſome happy Favourites who had a greater Intereſt in his Love than others. We read that *JESUS loved* Lazarus, and of *the Diſciple whom JESUS loved*, but there is no Neceſſity to underſtand this of a Love of Deſire, and whatever other Reaſon may be aſſigned for this particular Kindneſs, I am apt to think the main Deſign of it was for our Example, that as our bleſſed Lord has left us a Pattern of every Virtue, ſo he might eſpecially recommend to us that moſt noble and comprehenſive one *Friendſhip*, which next to the Love of *GOD* has the Precedency of all the reſt. I am therefore very far from deſigning any Prejudice to Friendſhip by what I have offered here, I rather intend to aſſert and advance it. For he who permits his Deſires to run after his Friend, will in the

the End neither pleaſe himſelf nor advantage his Friendſhip. How often do we force the Almighty to deprive us of theſe dear Idols that have uſurped our Hearts? That ſo he may convince us how improper it is to permit our Souls to cleave to any Creature, which, allowing it to be able to entertain us at preſent, can give no Security for the future. And therefore he who would ſecure his Felicity, and have the Current of his Delight perpetual, muſt not ſuffer his Love to fix on any Object but that which is *the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever.* Beſides, the Defects which we find in Friendſhip, owe their Original to this miſplaced Deſire. 'Tis this, that knowing the Narrowneſs of Humane Nature makes us endeavour to monopolize a worthy Perſon to our ſelves, whereby we do him

him a great Injury by contracting and limiting his Benevolence. This is it that hoodwinks our Souls, and makes us blind to our Friend's Imperfections; for where-ever Love fixes it either finds or fancies Excellency and Perfection: To diſcover a Defect embitters its Delight, wakes it out of its pleaſant Dream, and is an uneaſie Monitor that it ought not to reſt here, ſince what is defective is ſo far not good, and conſequently not lovely. But he who will not ſee his Friend's Infirmities is not like to inform him of them, and ſo fruſtrates the great Deſign of Friendſhip which is to diſcover and correct the moſt minute Irregularity, and to purifie and perfect the Mind with the greateſt Accuracy. What is it but Deſire that creates thoſe Jealouſies and Diſquiets which

ſome-

ſometimes creep into this refined Affection? For pure Benevolence delighting in *doing* good, and having no Regard to the *receiving* it, would not be diſguſted at the Kindneſs which is ſhewn to a third Perſon, but rather rejoyce at the Exerciſe of its Friend's Virtue. From Deſire proceeds that unbecoming Exceſs of Grief which is apt indecently to tranſport us when *GOD* tranſlates our Friend from our Boſom into his own. A generous and regular Friendſhip after it has paid that Tribute of Tears which Nature and the Worth of the Perſon requires, will rather prompt us to ſympathize with and rejoyce in his Happineſs, than to regret and complain of our own Loſs. There is yet another Indecency that would be prevented were our Love only benevolent; and that is, that

ſtrong Antipathy which uſually ſucceeds Affection whenever it comes to a Rupture, as 'tis odds but it may, conſidering the great Weakneſs of Humane Nature, and how ſeldom a Man is in every Stage of his Life conſiſtent with himſelf, for a rightly conſtituted Friendſhip will incline us by all the Arts of Sweetneſs and Endearment to win upon the Offender, who has ſo much the greater *need* of our Benevolence, by how much he does the leſs *deſerve* it. Our Kindneſs when he no longer returns it is the more excellent and generous, becauſe more free: And though it cann't be called Friendſhip when the Bond is broke on one ſide, yet there may be a moſt refined and exalted Benevolence on the other.

After all, methinks Benevolence is the moſt great and noble Kind of

of Love, and I wonder what ſhould make us ſo fond of Deſire, and ſo unwilling to withdraw it from the Creature, ſince ſo placed it is a continual Reproach to us, and perpetually upbraids us with our Weakneſs and Indigence. To need and deſire nothing out of himſelf is the Prerogative and Perfection of the Divine Nature: And though a Creature need not bluſh to languiſh after *GOD*'s Fulneſs, and to thirſt for this *Fountain of Living Water*, yet methinks it ſhould, to long after *broken Ciſterns*, Creatures as dry and empty as it ſelf; did we therefore conſult either our Honour or our Intereſt, we ſhould without Reluctancy baniſh the Creature from our Hearts, abandoning all other Deſires but that which has all the Pleaſure and Advantage of Love, without a-

ny of its Pain and Imperfection.

And thus Sir, I have endeavoured in this and my laſt, to point out, though very imperfectly, ſome of the Prerogatives of Divine Love. And I hope 'twill appear from the Utility as well as from the Reaſonableneſs of the thing, that we ought to fix the whole of our Love on our Maker. And in Truth, if we think it reaſonable to love GOD at all, I know not how we can with Safety permit our Hearts to love any thing elſe. For though we may fancy that the Love of the Creature is not contradictory, but ſubordinate to the Love of GOD, yet Love being the moſt rapid of all Motions, if once our Deſire be ſet a moving, in vain do we think to ſtop and circumſcribe it; and therefore as

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it is unjuſt, ſo it is unſafe to give it the leaſt Tendency towards any Object but him who is the only proper and adequate one.

I am exceedingly pleas'd with *M. Malbranch*'s Account of the Reaſons why we have no Idea of our Souls, and wiſh I could read that ingenious Author in his own Language, or that he ſpake mine. However I have ſome Queries to make about the Matter, but muſt refer it to another Opportunity. You tell me I muſt not expect a Definition of Pleaſure, all I deſire is only ſuch an Account as we have of ſome other things, which ſtrictly ſpeaking are not capable of a Definition; that Notion which I have entertained of Pleaſure is, That it is *that grateful Reliſh or Senſation, which every Faculty enjoys, in the regular Application of it ſelf, to ſuch Objects*

as are agreeable to its Nature. Or if you pleaſe, *Pleaſure* I take to be, *the Gratification of Natural Appetites according to, and not exceeding the Intention of Nature,* and I pray be ſo kind as to tell me wherein I Miſtake, whereby you will further engage me to be

Sir,

February 15. 1693. Your very humble

and thankful Servant.

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LETTER VIII.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

I Am no leſs pleaſed than your ſelf that my great Argument for the intire Love of GOD taken from his being the only true Cauſe of our good, is ſo well diſcharged of that Difficulty which you urged againſt it, becauſe (as I told you in my firſt) I think it the only material one to which it ſtands expoſed, and becauſe it has received from your skilful Hand the utmoſt Advantage it was capable of. So that now I cannot but conclude the Bottom I go upon to be very ſound, not expecting to be attacked by a

ſtronger Objection, or by one better managed. The ſame occurred to my own Thoughts while I was compoſing my Diſcourſe, but I thought it would be time enough to conſider it when it came to be objected, and I have ſince met with a little flying Touch of it in a modern Philoſopher of very conſiderable Note, Monſieur *Regis* a *Carteſian*, who in the *16th.* Chapter of his *Metaphyſicks* contends upon this very Ground that GOD is not the Moral Good of Man. GOD (ſays he) is not the Moral Good of Man neither becauſe he produces thoſe things which are agreeable to him, nor becauſe he cauſes thoſe Pleaſures which he feels. Not the firſt, becauſe GOD would then be the moral good of all other Creatures as well as Man, becauſe he does as much produce what

what in agreeable to them as what is ſo to Man. No: the ſecond, becauſe GOD would then be no leſs the moral evil of Man than his moral good, becauſe he does no leſs produce the Pain which he ſuffers, than the Pleaſure which he enjoys. From which without adding a Word more, as if this had been a moſt clear and inconteſtable Demonſtration, he poſitively concludes that GOD is not the moral good of Man. Not only that he is not ſo for this Reaſon as the Cauſe of our Pleaſure (as your Objection runs) but that he is not ſo at all. For he concludes that if he be ſo, it muſt be upon one or other of the forementioned Accounts, which ſince he is not, therefore he will not allow him to be ſo at all. A ſtrange Paradox by the way, but what Force there is in the Proof of it may

be

be determined from the Meaſures premiſed.

The other Difficulty againſt the intire Love of GOD taken from its Inconſiſtency with the Love of our Neighbour (which you ſay you have heard ſome urge againſt my Account of the firſt and great Commandmrnt) is indeed in one reſpect more preſſing than the former, though eaſier to be reſolved, becauſe it is directly levelled, not againſt the Reaſon only of the Propoſition, but the Truth of it. But I wonder to hear of this Objection as pertinent as it is, ſince I thought I had already laid in a ſufficient Caution againſt it in the Diſcourſe it ſelf. For 'tis moſt certain that the moſt intire Love of GOD enjoyn'd in the firſt Commandment does by no means exclude the Love of our Neighbour

bour injoyned in the ſecond, in caſe theſe two Loves be of two different Kinds, the former ſuppoſe, Love of Deſire, and the latter Love of Benevolence, there being no manner of Repugnancy between the deſiring none but GOD, and the wiſhing well to Men, and 'tis only the joyning theſe two different Ideas under one common Name (*Love*) that makes it ſeem as if there were. To love none but GOD, and yet to love others beſides GOD, do indeed ſeem to be contradictory Propoſitions, but 'tis all becauſe of the Equivocation of the Word (*Love*) which when applied to GOD in the firſt Commandment ſignifies deſiring him as a good, and when applied to Men in the ſecond ſignifies not deſiring them as a Good, but deſiring good to them. And cannot I thus

love

love GOD only, and my Neighbour too, and ſo fulfil both Commands? Cannot I deſire but one thing only in the World, and yet at the ſame time wiſh well to every thing elſe? 'Tis plain that I may, and that the Intireneſs of my Love to GOD does no way prejudice my Love to my Neighbour, ſuppoſing the latter Love to be of a different Kind from the former. Thoſe therefore that will have one of theſe to be excluſive of the other, ought firſt to prove that the Word (*Love*) uſed in both commands is taken according to the ſame Senſe in both, that by Love of our Neighbour is meant Love of Deſire as well as by the Love of GOD, without which their Objection is precarious, and inſtead of proving, they do but beg the Queſtion. And I ſhould be glad to

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see any of our Objectors prove what hitherto they are pleased to presume, that by Love of our Neighbours is intended Love of Desire.

If they on the other hand demand what Proof I have that the Love of our Neighbour here is not Love of Desire, I answer, first that according to all the Laws of Dispute I may reasonably take leave to suppose that it is not, till my Objectors prove that it is. Since my Account of the first Commandment does not overthrow the second but only upon Supposition that Love of our Neighbour there signifies Love of Desire, they that lay that to my Charge ought in all Logick and Conscience to prove that it has that Signification, till which time I may fairly suppose that it has not, and that the rather because they themselves cannot

pre-

pretend that Deſire is the only thing that is called by the Name of Love, but muſt needs allow that there is alſo a Love of Benevolence, and that theſe two have very diſtinct Idea's. But not to inſiſt upon a Privilege I do not need: I anſwer again that all thoſe Arguments whereby I prove that GOD only ought to be loved with Love of Deſire, do alſo implicitly prove that that is not the Love wherewith we are to love our Neighbour, and conſequently that that is not the Love intended in the ſecond Commandment, but only Love of Benevolence. For ſince there are but theſe two Sorts of *Love*, and ſince (which is the very Foundation of the Objection) the intire *Love* of GOD is not conſiſtent with the *Love* of our Neighbour, as *Love* ſignifies Deſire, if I prove that

GOD

GOD only ought to be loved with *Love* of Deſire (as I think I have done) then it muſt follow either that our Neighbour ought not to be loved at all, which is manifeſtly abſurd, or that *Love* of Benevolence is the *Love* that muſt fall to his ſhare, and that which conſequently is enjoyned in the ſecond Commandment. And I wonder how it ſhould enter into ſo many Men's Heads, as it does, to imagin that any other *Love* than this was here intended. For though it were otherwiſe never ſo lawful and allowable to love our Neighbour with *Love* of Deſire, and he otherwiſe never ſo capable of it, yet is it imaginable that this ſhould be made the matter of a *Command*, and required of us as a Duty! Is it once to be thought that God who is an infinite Good, infinitely deſirable,

ſirable, infinitely deſerving of our higheſt Affections, nay of our whole Love; and withall infinitely able to ſatisfie and reward it, ſhould Command us to Love or Deſire a Creature, and a Creature as vain and infirm and inſufficient, as much a Shadow as our ſelves, and that immediately after he had in ſuch Emphatick Terms required us to fix our Love upon himſelf? Is it I ſay to be thought, that GOD when he had laid it upon us as a Duty to repoſe our ſelves upon his own Stable Centre, ſhould immediately after require us to lean upon that which cannot ſuſtain its own weight? That when he had commanded us to come and quench our mighty Thirſt at his own ever ſpringing Fountain (with whom as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks *is the Well of Life*) he ſhould in the

the very next Breath ſend us away to a Ciſtern, and that too a broken one? That he ſhould firſt call us to himſelf, and then as if he alone were not able to ſuffice for us, and to ſatisfie thoſe inlarged Appetites which he had given us, ſhould call in the Creatures to bear part of the Expence, and ſend us from himſelf to them? Are theſe Thoughts worthy of GOD? But beſides, let me Appeal to any of thoſe who contend for Love of Deſire as the Love of the Second Commandment, Do they ever feel any Remorſe of Conſcience for having been wanting in Love of Deſire towards their Neighbour; or does their Conſcience ever upbraid them for having thereby fail'd in their regard towards the Second Commandment; or do they ever think it neceſſary to Repent for having been

defective in this kind of Love? Our Conſcience indeed does often upbraid to us our Deſire of Creatures (as you very well remark from our Baſhfulneſs and Unwillingneſs to own our ſelves to be in Love) but never that I know of, does it Reproach us for our Indifferency towards them, or prompt us to Repent of it. And indeed it would be a ſtrange kind of Repentance for a Man to fall upon his Knees, and Confeſs to GOD as a Sin, that he had withdrawn all his Deſires from his Creatures and fix'd them wholly upon him; that he did not deſire them as his good, though at the ſame time he wiſh'd them, and was ready to do them all the good he could. I dread to ſpeak the Language of ſuch a Penitent, when I conſider what an abſurd Command he Fathers upon God.

God. For can we imagin that GOD will charge that perſon as guilty of the Second Commandment who intirely loves him, and bears a hearty good-will to his Fellow Creatures, merely becauſe he does not alſo deſire them as his good? Is it not enough to wiſh and do well to them? For tell me Madam, what you think of this ſuppoſition: I will ſuppoſe a Man to place his whole Affection upon GOD, and ſo to love him with all his Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength, as to withdraw his Love from all the Creatures, and not in the leaſt to deſire any of them as his goods, only to deſire good to them all, to do them good as far as he has opportunity, and to endeavour to unite them to the true good. I further ſuppoſe him to perſevere in this Diſpoſition of

Mind to the very laſt, and then ask whether you can think that ſuch a Perſon has any thing to anſwer at the Bar of GOD's Juſtice for the Breach of the ſecond Commandment, or whether you think God will damn and eternally ſeparate ſuch an one from his Preſence, as defective in his Meaſures of Charity merely for not making Creatures his good, and the Object of his Deſire? But I need not put ſuch a Queſtion to you, who I am perſwaded at the firſt Propoſal of it will be ſo far from judging ſuch a Perſon to be a juſt Object of God's Diſpleaſure, that you will conclude he has all that is neceſſary to recommend him to his higheſt Favour, and to qualifie him to partake of his Sovereign Happineſs. But 'tis a Queſtion very proper to be put to my Adverſaries, who muſt either

ther ſay that God will damn a Perſon of this Character, or (which therefore appears to be certainly the right) that Love of Deſire is not the Love required of us in the ſecond Commandment, but only Love of Benevolence, which whoever has does by that alone ſufficiently ſatisfie the Intention and Obligation of that Law.

Beſides, does not the Command ſufficiently explain it ſelf? For (as you very judiciouſly remark) our Saviour commands us to love our Neighbour as our ſelves, which by the Way ſeems to me not only an abſolute Meaſure, but a relative Character, put in on purpoſe to diſtinguiſh it from the Love of God. But now, as you will reſume; our Love of our ſelves is not Love of Deſire, but Love of Benevolence. Moſt undoubtedly ſo,

for whoever reflects upon the Love of himſelf will preſently perceive that 'tis not a deſiring of himſelf as his good, but a deſiring of ſome good to himſelf, as appears from that vulgar Expreſſion, *Charity begins at home*, and from the Vice of Self-love, by which we mean a craving and ſeeking after more than comes to a Man's Share without having Regard to the Community, or a greedy Purſuance of ones own private Intereſt in Oppoſition to that of the Publick. Your other Remark is no leſs important, that our Saviour does alſo command us to love one another as he hath loved us, that is, ſay you, not with *Love* of Deſire, but that of Benevolence. For as God he could not love us with *Love* of Deſire, and as Man he need not, ſince *Love* of Benevolence would anſwer

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all the Ends of his coming into the World, to which I add that neither need he as Man becauſe as ſuch he was perſonally united to the ſupreme good, with which Union I cannot conceive how the Deſire of any Creature ſhould be conſiſtent. For as God himſelf cannot deſire any thing out of himſelf becauſe of his own Fulneſs, ſo neither can he that enjoys God deſire any thing out of him becauſe of the Fulneſs of *GOD*. The Enjoyment of *GOD* does certainly put a final Period to all Deſire, and utterly quench the moſt flaming Thirſt of a Creature, and how then can he whoſe Deſire is ſatisfied deſire any further, or if he does, how then is it ſatisfied? For which reaſon by the way I think it neceſſary to conclude that the bleſſed in Heaven finding all poſſible good in the Enjoyment of

GOD cannot deſire any thing out of him, but that all Love of the Creature does utterly ceaſe, and is for ever ſilenced in that Region of Happineſs, and that *GOD* is all in all to thoſe that enjoy him. But now we cannot ſuppoſe any of the bleſſed Spirits ſo united to *GOD* in Heaven, as our Saviour was while upon Earth, who therefore muſt be ſuppoſed to love Mankind with Love of Benevolence only (as being capable of no other) and conſequently to require the ſame kind of Love from Men to one another. But there needs no Argument from without to prove this to be his meaning. The Text you refer to (*John* 13. 34.) ſufficiently ſpeaks its own Senſe. *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. As I have loved you that ye alſo love one another.* Wherein 'tis plain

plain that our Saviour refers to that ſignal Inſtance of his Benevolence in his undertaking the Work of our Redemption, and in Proportion requires the ſame ſort of Love from his Diſciples, that if Occaſion were, they ſhould be ready to lay down their Lives for the Salvation of their Brethren, as he had done for them, which is the natural Senſe of the Words, and made to be ſo by the beſt Expoſitors that I know of upon the Place.

But beſides, does not the Scripture always expreſs our Love towards our Neighbour as a Love of Benevolence only? *Love* (ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. 10.) *worketh no ill to his Neighbour*, that is, does not hurt or injure him, but do him all good. Which Character ſhews it to be truly meant of Love of Benevolence. I ſay truly. And

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that 'tis meant of that *only*, as being of it ſelf intirely commenſurate to the full Extent of Charity, is evident from the Words that follow, *therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Of what Law? Not to be ſure of the firſt Table. For our Love to our Neighbour though never ſo perfect, cannot ſatisfie our Obligation to *GOD.* It muſt be therefore of the ſecond Table, which being thus fulfilled by Benevolence can require no other Love than that. This is Demonſtration. Again, when the ſame Apoſtle reckons up the Fruits of Charity, does he make any mention of Deſire, does he not deſcribe them all by the Expreſſions of Benevolence? He ſays, *it ſuffers long and is kind, that it envies not, vaunts not it ſelf, is not puffed up, does not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeks not her own,*

own, is not eaſily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoyces not in Iniquity, but in the Truth, that it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and indures all things, but it ſeems the Apoſtle had forgot to put in Deſire, or elſe he thought it no Part of Chriſtian Charity. And I muſt confeſs that I am of the latter Opinion.

And as the Scripture always ſpeaks of Brotherly *Love* and Charity in Terms importing Benevolence, ſo whenever it ſpeaks of the oppoſite Vice does it not always deſcribe it by contrary Characters? Does it ever deſcribe it by want of Deſire? No, but by want of good Will, by Anger, Wrath, Envy, Bitterneſs, Malice and ſuch like Terms. And by what Meaſure of Love it is that Chriſt will proceed in his Judgment of the World, whether by *Love* of Bene-

nevolence or by *Love* of Deſire I ſhall leave to be determined by what he ſays himſelf concerning that matter in the 25th Chapter of St. *Matthew*. From all which put together I think nothing can be more clear and certain than that the *Love* intended and required in the ſecond great Commandment of the Law, is not Love of Deſire, but only Love of Benevolence. And I cannot imagine what (beſides the Equivocation of the Word *Love*) ſhould make the World run ſo generally upon a contrary Notion, unleſs it be that Clauſe in the Commandment: *And the ſecond is like unto it*, whence perhaps it has been concluded that becauſe the firſt is meant of *Love* of Deſire, therefore the ſecond muſt be ſo too. But he muſt be either much prejudiced, or very dull-ſighted

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that does not ſee that *by like unto it* is only meant of equal Authority and Obligation in Oppoſition to the Phariſaic Partiality towards the Precepts of the *Law*. Well then the Reſult of the preſent Conſiderations is this, ſince that moſt intire *Love* of *GOD* I ſtand for in the firſt Commandment does not at all interfere with the *Love* of our Neighbour in the ſecond ſuppoſing that by *Love* there we are not to underſtand Love of Deſire, but only Love of Benevolence, and ſince as I have ſhewn Love of Benevolence is the Love there ſolely intended, I may now with Aſſurance conclude that the Account I have given of the firſt Commandment, as high as it is, is no way injurious to the ſecond, the thing that is generally laid to my Charge. But you go further, undertaking

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to ſhow that my Account of the *Love* of *GOD* is ſo far from being prejudicial to that of our Neighbour, that it is the only true ſolid Foundation it can reſt upon. I thoroughly approve what you ſay upon this Part, but ſhall not offer to add any thing to it, becauſe indeed you have ſaid all. I promiſed in my laſt that in my next I would add ſomething to the Reaſon of our loving *GOD* ſo intirely, but having fallen upon a Vein of other Thoughts, and thoſe of no ſlight Importance, muſt beg you to let me be in your Debt for this untill another Opportunity, as alſo for what you further deſire concerning Pleaſure. In the mean time I leave you to that of

your

your own Meditations, more of which upon this great Subject will be highly grateful to

Madam,

Bemerton, March 23. Your very humble Servant

J. Norris.

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LETTER IX.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

YOU have ſo clearly removed the Objection made againſt the intire Love of GOD, on account of its being prejudicial to the *Love* of our Neighbour, that I hope we ſhall hear no more of that matter. And truly when our Objectors have once felt (as they will for certain ſooner or later) the Diſquiet and *Uneaſineſs*, we may well refer them to their own Experience for a full Conviction of the *Unreaſonableneſs* of ſuch Deſires. As far as I can perceive the Objection is founded upon Suppoſition, *That all Human Love*

Love is a Love of Deſire; a Love that ariſes from and terminates in that inſatiable Deſire we have of our own Happineſs: Which methinks is a very great Reproach to Humane Nature, which as bad as it is, is not uncapable of a pure and diſintereſſed Benevolence. Had they duly attended to what you have writ in your *Theory of Love*, *Part* 1. *Sect.* 5. They would have diſcerned the Falſeneſs of their Suppoſition. But though all other Arguments ſhould fail, my own Experience would aſſure me that there is ſuch a thing as unmixed Benevolence; for there are ſome Perſons in the World to whom I could perform the higheſt Services, without any the leaſt Intuition of Reward, or Proſpect of bettering my own Being.

And now, to proceed in our most excellent Subject, though I am very sensible how much I depretiate it by my unkilful Management; yet that I may give occasion to your better Meditations, and because of the just Deference I pay you, I am contented in Compliance with your Desire, rather to discover my Ignorance than be wanting in my Respect. I will therefore first declare what I think may be added to the Unreasonableness of loving the Creature; and secondly what to the Reasonableness of interpreting the first and great Commandment in the strictest Notion; all along subjoyning such Remarks as offer themselves, and seem not to me altogether forreign to the Subject.

For the first, I think it very unreasonable to love the Creature, be-

becauſe it can never anſwer the End of Love. We deſire only in order to Happineſs, nothing being deſirable any further than as it promotes that End; but the Love of the Creature is more apt to hinder than advance our Happineſs which is the End of loving, and therefore in all reaſon Creatures ought not to be thought deſirable. It may perhaps be objected that this is metaphyſical Nonſence, for the Creature is ſo neceſſary in order to our good, that whilſt we are in the World we are ſo far from being happy, that we cannot ſo much as ſubſiſt without it. I do not deny this, provided the Creature be uſed only as an *Occaſion* of our good, and with that Indifferency that is due to it. But if we reſt in it as our End, and deſire it as the true *Cauſe* of our Pleaſure, it is ſo far

from being our good, that it certainly becomes our evil, in that it deludes our Expectations, ſhrinks under us when we have laid the Weight of our Souls upon it, and cauſes us to fall into Air and Emptineſs. That the Creature cannot make us happy is evident from all thoſe Topicks that declare its Vanity, its Uncertainty, and Inability to fill the Capacities of the Soul. For let a Man graſp as much of the Creature as poſſibly he can, he will ſtill find an Emptineſs in his Soul, ſomething that is ſtill wanting to compleat his Bliſs, which is the Reaſon why we are always upon the Hunt after Variety of Enjoyments, like a Boy at the Foot of a Hill, who fancies if he were at the Top he ſhould touch the Sky, but when he comes there, finds it as much out of his Reach as ever.

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So true is that Concluſion of the wiſe King, who had both the fulleſt Enjoyment of temporal things, and the beſt Capacity to judge of them of any we know of, that *all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* And therefore unleſs Reaſon require us to place our Felicity in that which will certainly be our Vexation, it cannot be reaſonable to love the Creature; and conſequently if Love be not an unreaſonable Paſſion, and if it be fit to love at all, 'tis highly reaſonable to love *GOD*, and him *only*.

But if abſtracted Reaſons can't perſwade us to the intire Love of GOD, let it further be conſidered, that this is the beſt way to ſecure to us that which we are ſo very fond of, even the Enjoyment of the Creature. It is moſt certain that the Divine Benignity does nei-

ther grudge, nor envy, nor arbitrarily deny us any thing that has a true Tendency towards our Satisfaction, and therefore when he deprives us of thoſe occaſional goods that miniſter to our Eaſe and Pleaſure, 'tis only that he may more fully ſecure our Intereſt in our true and only good, by removing thoſe things that ſtood between us and it, which eclipſed our View, withdrew our Affections, and hindred us in the Enjoyment of it. And therefore to fix our Love warmly and entirely on GOD, is the moſt likely Way to be ſure of poſſeſſing all that is good in other things. For the Croſſes and Diſappointments that we meet with are mainly deſigned to divert us from our vain Purſuit after the Shadow of good, and to direct us towards the Subſtance; to ſhow

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us experimentally ſince we will not ſufficiently attend to what Reaſon ſuggeſts, the Emptineſs and Unſatisfactorineſs of all created good, that ſo we may more directly purſue, and inſeparably cleave to the uncreated.

I may add, that if we have any Generoſity in us, any Senſe of the Dignity of our Nature, we cannot but acknowledge that 'tis little and low, and unbecoming the Soul of Man to place the leaſt Degree of its Happineſs in any Creature whatſoever. Since the Soul is capable of enjoying the firſt and ſovereign good, and ſince he freely offers himſelf to her Embraces, 'tis as injurious to her Honour as to her Happineſs to ſtoop to a Creature, and to degrade her ſelf to ſuch mean Enjoyments.

The next thing to be done is to add ſomewhat to the Reaſonableneſs of interpreting the great Commandment in the ſtricteſt Notion. That our Saviour's meaning was that we ſhould love the Lord our GOD with all the Force and Energy of our Souls excluſively of all other Loves, may be preſumed from the great Aptitude there is in ſuch a Love to promote the Deſign of Religion in general, and of the Chriſtian Religion in particular, which is, to retrieve the original Rectitude and Perfection of Humane Nature, or rather to improve it; to new draw and perfect in our Souls that beautiful Image of our Maker, which by our Sins and Errors we have defaced; in a word, to makes us as Godlike as is conſiſtent with the Capacity of a Creature; and I know not any thing

thing that does ſo effectually conduce to this as the intire Love of GOD. The End of Love is to unite its ſelf to its Object, every Motion it makes is in order to that End, and ſince Heterogeneous Subſtances can never cordially unite, ſince without Similitude of Diſpoſition there can be no Union, therefore Love does ever endeavour after Likeneſs; it would if it were poſſible have an Identity of Eſſence, and, as far as the Nature of things will admit, incorporate with the beloved Object. Hence nothing is ſo excellent at Imitation as Love, nothing does ſo eaſily aſſimilate, which by the way, is one reaſon why we ought not to love the World, becauſe of the Danger of being conformed to it. If then we love GOD intirely we ſhall with all the Powers of our Soul

Soul endeavour to be like him, and according to the Degree of our Love, ſo will be the Nearneſs of our Reſemblance. For we cannot make GOD like our ſelves, if therefore we deſire a Union we muſt *be conformed to the Divine Nature.* *Love*, as the wiſe Man long ſince obſerv'd, *ſurpaſſes all things for Illumination.* And wherefore does it ſo, but becauſe it fixes the Eyes of our Mind upon its Object, makes them keen and piercing; cauſes our Thoughts to dwell upon its Beauties, for they will always be buſied about what we love? And as Love is very ſagacious in finding out every little Punctilio that will recommend it to its beloved, ſo it is moſt reſtleſs and unwearied in the Practice of all Endearments, It will regulate all its Operations by his Models, imitate all his imi-

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table Perfections, that ſo it may moſt powerfully recommend it ſelf, by that which is the great Band of Affection, Similitude of Nature. Since therefore the Love of *GOD* has ſuch an Aptneſs to promote the great Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, 'tis but reaſonable to think that our Lord upon this very Account did ſo highly magnifie, and ſo ſtrictly enforce it. And indeed, ſince Love does ſo powerfully influence all our Motions, ſince all our Endeavours, all our Operations and Varieties of Acting tend to nothing elſe but the Accompliſhment of ſome Deſire, 'tis but fit and decorous that all our Deſires ſhould fix on him, whoſe we are, and for whoſe Glory we were created.

To the Reaſonableneſs of the Love of GOD, we may further add

add the Neceſſity of it, and that upon a double Account. Firſt, becauſe this is the only Vital Principle of Holineſs, the only effectual Means of ſecuring our Obedience, and conſequently of preparing us for the Enjoyment of GOD. There is no way of uniting our ſelves to GOD but by keeping his Commandments, for then, and not otherwiſe, do *we dwell in him and he in us.* Since therefore Obedience is neceſſary in order to Happineſs, that which is the only true Principle of Obedience muſt be of equal Neceſſity. And that without Love there can be no true Obedience, and whereever Obedience is found 'tis a certain *Criterion* of Love, is plainly evident from our Saviour's diſcourſing in the 14. and 15. Chapters of St. *John*; ſo that to derive univerſal Obedi-

Obedience from the Love of GOD, or to argue from that Obedience to the intire Love of GOD, is as ſound a Way of Argumentation as to prove any other Effect by its Cauſe, or Cauſe by the Effect. It were eaſie to ſhow how every particular Duty is neceſſarily conſequent to the Love of GOD, how it is founded upon, and does naturally ſpring from it. But I ſhall not here enter into the Detail, I will only take notice of the Management of our Thoughts, becauſe on them depends our Words and Actions, and derive the Neceſſity of the intire Love of GOD, from the Impoſſibility of governing our Thoughts as we ought without it. Now this is moſt certain, that what we love will be uppermoſt in our Minds; there is no better Diagnoſtick to diſcover our

Love

Love than by observing what is the most frequent Subject of our Thoughts. For Thought seems to me to be nothing else but the Determination of the Soul to some certain Object which she desires either to contemplate or enjoy, a forming in her self the Images and Representations of what she delights in, or contriving how she may obtain it, and remove what stands betwixt her and it: And therefore where-ever the Weight of our Desire rests, the Stream of our Thoughts will follow; 'tis to no Purpose to drive them away, for though we may for a while put a Force on them, they will insensibly steal back again. So that if we mean to *keep our Hearts with all Diligence* (the only way to secure our outward Demeanour) we must above all things take care to regulate

late our Deſire, ſince it is by this that we fall into Deſtruction. If therefore our Hearts be too buſie about any thing in this World, I know no other Way to cure that Diſorder but by rectifying our Deſire: Let us ceaſe to love it, and we ſhall eaſily reſtrain our Hearts from being inordinately buſied about it.

It is not ſo much the Force of Temptations, alas! All that the World and the Devil can offer to bribe our Hearts is paultry and inconſiderable; it is not ſo much the unavoidable Infirmity of our Nature, which has not ſuch an Averſion to *GOD* as we pretend; but it is the Defect of our Love, our wilful miſplacing that Divine Affection, our voluntary hankerings after the Creature that ſets us at Diſtance from the Creator.

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For let any one who has been intimately acquainted with the Movements of his own Heart tell me, whether he does not find that all the ſtrong Guſts of Temptation blow from the Quarter? Whilſt he duly contemplates the divine Perfections, looks on GOD as his true and only good and deſires him accordingly, is not his Obedience prompt and ready, does not his Mind move with Alacrity and unwearied Vigor, and are not all its Motions regular and pleaſing? But no ſooner does his Deſire ſtep into a By-path, and he ſuffer himſelf to doat on the Creature, but all is unhinged and falls into Diſorder, the Wheels of his Chariot move ſlowly, his Thoughts wander, his Devotion languiſhes, his Paſſions grow unruly, his Intentions corrupt, and his good Actions be-

become lame and broken. Let us not therefore complain of our Liſtleſſneſs in the Worſhip of *GOD*, our Coldneſs and Wandrings in his Service, how much Labour it coſts us to raiſe up our Hearts to Heaven, and put them in a right Tune, but rather let us complain of our want of Love, for that is the true Cauſe of all this Untowardneſs, all our Sins and Infirmities, our moral Miſtakes and Imperfections proceed from nothing elſe but this; let us once baniſh our Idols from our Hearts whatever they are, and we ſhall quickly find that all will be well again. For in vain do we ſearch for Rules to regulate our Manners, and preſcribe Remedies to cure our Infirmities, which do but baffle our Induſtry and reproach our Skill, our Preſcriptions will do us but

little Service till we have reformed our Love, the Miſapplication of which is the true Source of all our Diſorder, the corrupt Root of all our Faults. If therefore we would come up to our holy Religion, if we would be thoſe wiſe and excellent Creatures that *GOD* deſigns we ſhould, let us above all things fix our Love on its proper Object, put it in a regular Motion, and then do but allow it Scope, and faithfully purſue its Tendencies, and we need not be afraid of doing amiſs; we ſhould run the Race that is ſet before us with Chearfulneſs and Vigor, in a direct Line, and with an unwearied Conſtancy. For when Love is arrived at its *Zenith*, when GOD is *all in all*, then and not till then, ſhall we be conſummate; and the greater Progreſs we make in this Love whilſt

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we ſtay on Earth, the nearer Approaches do we make to Perfection. Could we love *GOD* as intirely as he loves himſelf, we ſhould then be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

One way whereby the Love of *GOD* mightily facilitates our Obedience, and ſecures the Performance of it is this, it reduces our Duty to a very narrow Compaſs. For it is not the Difficulty but the Multiplicity of our Tasks which is the Cauſe that ſome of them are neglected. We cannot ſay of any particular Duty that it is impoſſible, and yet through the Shortneſs of our Views, and Narrowneſs of our Powers, it frequently happens that ſome of our Devoirs are unperformed. But though a Man cannot attend to many things at once, yet ſure he can to this one, to *love the Lord his GOD with all his*

Heart, &c. that is, to move towards him with all the Force of his Nature. And though I cannot ſay this will ſecure him from all pitiable Infirmities, yet I dare venture to affirm it will from all imputable Tranſgreſſions, and keep him as free from Sin as is conſiſtent with the Imperfection of this preſent State: And certainly to be fortified againſt the Venom, and ſecured from the Shame of Sin, is no inconſiderable Bleſſing. Repentance is indeed an excellent Atidote to expel the Poyſon, but 'tis much better not to take it. For though I were ſure to be delivered from the evil Conſequences of Sin, I would not commit it merely on account of its natural Turpitude and concomitant Evil. 'Tis ſo exceeding ugly in its own Nature, and ſuch a Reproach to ours, that though I know

know *GOD* (ſo great is his Goodneſs) will pardon me upon my true Repentance, yet I know not how to forgive my ſelf. Even that very Goodneſs which frees us from the puniſhment, encreaſes the Shame of Sin, and makes it ſo much the more abominable in that it is an Offence againſt ſo great a Goodneſs. *Joſeph*'s Expoſtulation in my Mind is very emphatick: How can I do this great Evil and ſin againſt *GOD*? He does not ſay how can I expoſe my ſelf to the Hazzard of Diſcovery, the Pain of Repentance, and all the evil Effects and Puniſhments of Sin? No, that which was moſt grievous to him, and is ſo to all ingenious Tempers, was the Oppoſition that is in Sin to the Nature of *GOD*, the Affront that it offers to his Majeſty and Goodneſs. In his Opini-

on Sin in its ſelf was the only conſiderable Evil, the only thing to be avoided and fled from, for certainly of all Puniſhments this is moſt deplorable, to be given up to our own Hearts Luſt, and ſuffered to follow our own Imaginations. But to return from this Digreſſion.

What was obſerved above is by the way a ſufficient Apology for the Strictneſs of the Divine Law. For ſince 'tis GOD only that does us good, and he only that is our Good; ſince all our Happineſs conſiſts in a Union with and Enjoyment of him; and ſince without Holineſs there can be no Union with *GOD*, and that without Obedience to his Commands we can never partake of his Nature; therefore Holineſs is of abſolute Neceſſity becauſe it is impoſſible to be happy without being holy.

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To ſuppoſe it is to ſuppoſe the greateſt Abſurdity, and to imagine, either that GOD is not our Happineſs, or that 'tis poſſible to enjoy him without being like him. We have therefore no reaſon to complain of the ſtricteſt Precepts of our Religion. For when we are commanded to *cleanſe our ſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, to perfect Holineſs, to deny and mortifie* that Part of us which is the Scene of Temptation, the *corruptible Body which preſſes down the Soul, to be holy in all manner of Converſation*, and in a word to be *perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect*; we are but in other Words commanded to be as happy as ever we can, no difficult Task one would think, we may rather wonder why it ſhould be enjoyned us, ſince Nature and the Reaſon of things dictate and preſs

it on us. But though we all naturally purſue after Happineſs, though we all conſtantly deſire it, yet we are too apt to miſtake the means of attaining it. And therefore GOD has thought fit out of his unſpeakable Goodneſs to ſend his Son into the World, to ſhew us by Precept and Example the true way to Felicity, and explicitly diſcover that which we all blindly purſue. He does not exact of us any Duty, but what if we had a juſt View of things we would chuſe our ſelves; and only engages us by all that Deference that is due to his Wiſdom, by all that Obedience we owe to his Authority, to ſeek for Happineſs there only where we are ſure to find it; to make uſe of ſuch Methods as will infallibly ſecure us from Deluſion and Diſappointment; and therefore we can

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never anſwer it either to Reaſon or good Nature if we be refractory to ſuch exuberant Kindneſs and Condiſcention.

But ſecondly, the intire Love of GOD is neceſſary, becauſe unleſs we love GOD only, we do in effect not love him at all, the Deſire of *GOD*, and Deſire of the Creature being in their own Nature incompatible, and by allowing our ſelves to love the one, we do by conſequence forſake the other. For beſides what you have already very excellently obſerved to this purpoſe in the Diſcourſe it ſelf, it may further be conſidered, that Love being the ſame to the Soul that Motion is to Bodies, as Bodies cannot have two Centers, or different Terms of Motion, ſo neither can the Soul have a twofold Deſire. We may as reaſonably expect that

a Stone ſhould go up Hill and down Hill at the ſame time, as that the Soul ſhould at once love GOD and any thing beſides him. To love is in other Words to make the thing beloved our End: We move towards good in order to make that good our own, and to embrace and acquieſce in it. Now he that loves the Creature does it becauſe he expects ſome Degrees of Happineſs (at leaſt) from it, and ſo far makes it his End, and conſequently does not center upon *GOD* as his compleat and only Felicity, for if he did, it were impoſſible to with-hold any Degree of his Love from him. Again, if as you ſaid in your laſt, he that enjoys *GOD* cannot Deſire any thing out of him, becauſe of the infinite Fulneſs of GOD, then certainly he that deſires any thing beſides GOD, what-

whatever he pretend, or however he deceive himſelf, does not truly love GOD, for if he did, that would quench all Deſire of the Creature. He that has diſcovered the Fountain will not ſeek for troubled and failing Streams to quench his Thirſt: He can never be content to ſtep aſide to catch at the Shadow who is in Purſuit and View of the Subſtance. The Soul that loves GOD has no occaſion to love other things, becauſe it neither needs nor expects Felicity from them whenever it moves towards the Creature it muſt neceſſarily forſake the Creator, and it can never truly turn to him without a Dereliction of all beſides him.

Perhaps this may be thought a skrewing up things to too great a Heigth, a winding up our Nature to a Pitch it is not able to reach; and

and though it may be fit and deſirable, yet it is not at preſent practicable to love GOD with ſuch an intenſe and abſtracted Affection. But I conſider, that ſince we are ſo apt to tumble down the Hill, ſo inclinable to take up with the leaſt and loweſt Meaſures; ſince 'tis impoſſible we ſhould love too much, and very great Danger of our loving too little; and that our Practice does conſtantly come ſhort of our Theory, our Copy ſeldom reach the Original; it cannot be amiſs to repreſent our Duty in the ſtricteſt Meaſures, to excite our Endeavours to do as well as we can, ſince we cannot expect to compaſs what we ought, or pay to the Divine Majeſty what is due to his tranſcendent Excellencies and infinite Love to us: And ſince our juſt Debt cannot be diſcharged, is

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it not fit to raiſe our Compoſition as high as our Stock will bear? Beſides, the Deſign of all this is only to ſecure and improve our Happineſs, and is it not an odd thing for a Man to complain of enjoying too much, and of being over happy? His Deſire of Happineſs is ever flaming, he may indeed be, and often is miſtaken in his Applications to particular Objects, can it then be thought a Diſcourteſie to direct him to that never-failing Spring, that ſtable Center which cannot diſappoint him? And though perhaps he may think it at firſt an uneaſie thing to reſtrain his Deſires from their uſual Haunts, and to put them in a new and quite contrary Motion, yet if the Reaſonableneſs of the thing cannot, at leaſt let his Kindneſs to himſelf perſwade him to make the Experiment, and

I doubt not but that in a very little time he will be fully convinced that the intire Love of GOD is as practicable and pleasurable as 'tis rational and perfective.

And indeed, nothing does so much greaten and inlarge the Mind as the Love of *GOD*; for when it has so vast a good before it, it must needs stretch it self to receive the Fullest Draught that ever it can, and to be covetous and ambitious of the supreme Good are very laudable Qualities. Farther yet, the Love of *GOD* will inspire the Soul with the most generous Sentiments. A noble Mind though it love never so heartily, will not desire Love again unless it can pretend to some Merit to recommend it. And though Merit is a thing that Creatures can have no Title to in respect of their Creator, yet some

faint

faint Reſemblance of it they may aſpire to. Though they cannot ſtrictly deſerve, yet they may do that which through his gracious Acceptance will entitle them to his Favour, which though it be not Merit, yet through his Condiſcention is equivalent to it. And therefore an ardent Lover of *GOD* will conſider how incongruous it is to preſent him with a mean and narrow Soul, a Heart grovling on the Earth, cleaving to little dirty Creatures. He will diſcern that nothing but what is great and beſt is fit for *GOD*'s Service, and will ſtrive even to out-do himſelf that he may procure an Oblation tolerably fit for ſuch a Majeſty. To conclude, when we can ſay with *David*, *our Hearts are fixed*, when they are *intirely* fixed on GOD, we have very great reaſon to *ſing and give Praiſe*,

Praiſe, for then we are truly and very happy, but never till then.

And now Sir, you have all that at preſent occurs to my Mind on this noble Argument, and when you have added what you promiſe, I think there will not remain much more to be ſaid upon this Subject, unleſs you will pleaſe to aſſign the Cauſe why we are ſo backward to a Love that is both ſo reaſonable in it ſelf, and ſo pleaſant and profitable to us. It may indeed ſeem exceeding ſtrange to a conſiderate Perſon, why any one who has the Uſe of Reaſon, ſhould not love *GOD*, or why he ſhould love any thing beſides him. For does not the Will as naturally and neceſſarily ſeek after good and cleave to it, as the hungry Appetite does to its Food, or the thirſty Hart to the refreſhing Streams? And does not

GOD

GOD comprehend all poſſible Good, is he not the very Fountain and ſole Author of it? Is he not Goodneſs it ſelf, that communicative Goodneſs which gave Being to all things, in whom all things are, and conſequently whatſoever is good in them muſt in a more eminent Manner ſubſiſt in him, as you have fully made out in a juſt Diſcourſe upon the Subject. And admitting that he were not the efficient Cauſe of all our good, of all our pleaſing Senſations; yet, according to the Principles of all Mankind (for they who deny GOD and his Goodneſs do not deſerve to be ranked in that Number) all the good that we do or can enjoy, is, if not that way, yet ſome way or other derived from him. Whither then can the Will poſſibly move but towards him?

Where can it quench its insatiable Thirst but in this inexhaustible Ocean of Delight? And having once tasted of this true and only satisfying good, is it possible that it should desire or relish any thing besides him? It is indeed strange, very strange that it should! And no body could imagine it if Experience did not daily declare it. From whence then does this Absurdity arise? What's the reason that we do not all seek for good there, and there only, where we all acknowledge it does in the most eminent manner reside? Why the Mischief is, that though we habitually know this, yet we do not actually consider it, or at least not so thoroughly as to determine us to this Choice. 'Tis our Misfortune that we live an animal before we live a rational Life; the

good

good we enjoy is mostly transmitted to us through Bodily Mediums, and contracts such a Tincture of the Conveyance through which it passes, that forgetting the true Cause and Sourse of all our good, we take up with those occasional goods that are more visible, and present to our animal Nature. Besides, the Mistakes of our Education do too much confirm us in this Error. We suck in false Principles and Tendencies betimes, and are taught, not to thirst after GOD as our only good, but to close with those visible Objects that surround us, to rest and stay in them. These we learn to covet and call our goods, to value our selves upon, and be pleased in the Enjoyment of them. And as we grow up we see the generality of the World pursuing the same

Method, and think it our Wiſdom to ſtrike in with the vulgar Herd. Probably we may have been taught to call on *GOD*, to acknowledge him the giver of all good things in a formal Addreſs, and when we have done ſo we fancy we have paid our Tribute, diſcharged our Duty, and therefore enquire no further into the meaning of it, but put on our Religion as we do our Cloaths in Conformity to the Faſhion, nay perhaps do not ſo much ſtudy, or make ſo many Inquiries about that as we do about the other. Thus are we inſenſibly betrayed into a wrong Motion, and blindly follow on in it, till at length we become ſo glew'd to the Creature, that 'tis almoſt as difficult to wean us from it, as it is to change the Leopard's Spots, or whiten the Negro's Skin: And finding

finding the Propenſion ſo early and ſo ſtrong, we imagine that Nature not Cuſtom is the Author of it, which certainly is a very groſs Miſtake. Tis voluntary Error, ſuperinduced Habits, and evil Cuſtoms that ſets us in Oppoſition to GOD, it is not through any Natural Averſion that we turn from him. For what can Nature deſire but a Supply of all her Wants, and a Union with the Fonntain of all Felicity? And ſhe is not ſo blind in other things as to miſtake a Stone for Bread, and Poyſon for Food. Nor would ſhe go retrograde in this her great and primary Motion, if we did not clap a falſe Byaſs on her, and force her into a By-path. Cuſtom as the Philoſopher well obſerved is no ſmall matter: It is the moſt difficult

thing imaginable to recall our Thoughts and withdraw the Stream of our Affections from that Channel in which they were used to flow. Which is a further proof of the great Necessity that lies upon us betimes to cut off all Desire from the Creature, to shut up all the Avenues of our Souls from created good, even from those dearest Idols that bear the nearest Resemblance to our Maker, to whom our Benevolence is due, though they ought not to usurp our Desire.

By this Time I have sufficiently tired you, and therefore must not stay to enlarge upon the Usefulness and consequently the Value of that Book of yours you were pleased to send me,

me, I can only return my Thanks for it, and all your other Favours, as it becomes

Sir,

St. *Philip* and St. *James*, 1694. Your much oblig'd

and humble Servant.

LETTER X.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

HAving been ſo happy in my laſt as to give you no leſs Satisfaction concerning the ſecond Difficulty ariſing from the ſeeming Inconſiſtency of the intire Love of *GOD* with the Love of our Neighbour, than concerning the firſt, ſuggeſted from the Cauſality of GOD in reference to Pain as well as Pleaſure, I ſhall now reſume that Thred of my Diſcourſe, which in the laſt ſave one I begun. but by Occaſion of the Objection croſſing my Way was forced to interrupt and proceed to add to what both you and my ſelf have already offered,

offered, ſuch further Improvement as I think neceſſary in order to the fuller Eſtabliſhment of the intire Love of GOD. The Truth and Reaſonableneſs of which Notion the more I think of it, ſeems to me ſo very evident, that as I cannot with-hold my Aſſent from it my ſelf, ſo were it not a matter of Practice wherein our Paſſions and Intereſts are concerned, as well as Theory that imploys our Underſtandings, I ſhould ſtrangely wonder at all rational and conſiderate Perſons that can. But this in great meaſure ſilences my Admiration. For this is the great Diſadvantage that all Truths of a moral Nature lie under in Compariſon of thoſe that are phyſical or mathematical, that though the former be in themſelves no leſs certain than the latter, and demonſtrated with

equal

equal Evidence, yet they will not equally convince, nor find a parallel Reception in the Minds of Men, becauſe they meet with their Paſſions and Luſts, and have oftentimes the will and affections to contend with even after they have gained upon their Underſtandings; whereas the other being abſtract and indifferent Truths, and ſuch wherein they are wholly diſintereſſed, ſtand or fall by their own Light, and never fail to be received according to the Degree of Evidence which they bring with them. Were I to deal only with the rational Part of Man, I ſhould think that half of what has been ſaid would be enough to convince that, but conſidering the Nature of the Truth I advance, and what a ſtrong Intereſt is made againſt it in the affectionate Part of humane Nature,

Nature, I cannot expect to find the generality of Men overforward to receive it. But then on the other ſide neither ſhall I for the ſame Reaſon think their Backwardneſs any Objection, or meaſure the Truth of the Propoſition by the Number of its Adherents. For when all is done, Men will believe no further than they like, and were the Notion never ſo ſelf-evident, or my Arguments for it never ſo convincing and demonſtrative, the mere Oppoſition that it carries to the Paſſions and lower Intereſts of Men, would I doubt not be enough to make it a Paradox. For what, to have our Hearts that have been for many Years, even from the firſt Pulſes of them, cleaving and fixing and adhering to the World, taking Root in it, and incorporating with it by a thouſand

ſand little Strings and Fibres, pluckt up and torn away from it all at once, and our Hands that had taken ſuch faſt hold of it, at one Blow forced from its ſweet Embraces? To be at once intirely divorced from all ſenſible Objects, to have all our Idols demoliſhed, and our high Places taken down, to be divided from the whole Creation, and to have all the Ties broken which by a numerous Union linked us to it, to be forced to undergo a myſtical Death, a ſpiritual Crucifixion, to be crucified to the World, and to have the World crucified to us, in one Word, to die to the Body and World wherein we live, and withdraw our Love from the Objects of Senſe that we may place it all upon a ſpiritual and intellectual good, who can expect that theſe things ſhould

down

down with the generality of Mankind, or that a Doctrine that encounters ſuch a ſtrong Tide of Prejudices ſhould find many Diſciples in a ſenſual and unmortified World? The other Precepts of Morality croſs only ſome particular Intereſts of Man, and fight only againſt ſome of his ſtraggling Paſſions, but this engages with the whole Body of Concupiſcence, and at once encounters the whole Intereſt of Prejudice, all the Force that is or can be raiſed in humane Nature. Which when I conſider, however convinced of the Truth of what I contend for in the Receſs of my Mind, I cannot hope by the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt reaſoning to reconcile the generality of the World to a Notion ſo oppoſite to the Paſſions, Cuſtoms and Prejudices of it. Only there may be here

here and there ſome liberal and ingenious Spirits who have in great meaſure purged themſelves from the Prejudices of Senſe, diſingaged their Hearts from the Love of ſenſible Objects, and ſo far entered into the Methods of true Mortification as to be capable of Conviction, and of having their Minds wrought upon by the Light and Force of Reaſon. And if we have not yet ſaid enough between us to convince ſuch as theſe, I would deſire them further to conſider.

That the natural Tendency of the Will being from the Author of our Natures muſt needs be right, it being impoſſible that GOD ſhould put a falſe Bias upon the Soul, and that therefore 'tis the Perfection and Duty of every rational Creature to conform thoſe Determinations of his Will that

are

are free to that which is natural, or in other Words to take Care that the Love of his Nature and the Love of his Choice conſpire in one, that they both agree in the ſame Motion, and concenter upon the ſame Object. Thus far I think I advance, nothing but what is clear and unqueſtionable. We are therefore only concerned to conſider what is the natural Inclination of the Will, or, what that Object is to which it naturally tends and ſtands inclined. To this the general Anſwer is eaſie, and ſuch as all Men will acquieſce in, who will be ready to confeſs that the natural Motion of the Will is to good in general. And that this is the true natural Term of its Motion is plain becauſe the Wills of all Men how different ſoever in their other particular Determinations

agree

agree in this, and becauſe we have no manner of Freedom in this Motion, or Command over it, but are altogether paſſive in it, which ſhews it to be properly a natural Motion. I lay down this therefore as an evident and undeniable Propoſition, that the natural Motion of the Will is to good in general. But now how can the Will be moved t wards good in general but by being moved towards all good? For to be moved towards good as good is to be moved towards all good. And how can the Will be moved towards all good but by being moved towards a univerſal Being who in himſelf is and contains all good? For as the Underſtanding cannot repreſent to it ſelf univerſal Ideas, but by being united to a Being who in the Simplicity of his Nature includes all Being, ſo

ſo neither can the Will be moved to good in general but by being moved towards a univerſal Being who by reaſon of the Infinity of his Nature comprehends all good, that is, towards GOD, who is therefore the true Term of the natural Motion of the Soul.

And that he is ſo will be further evident if we conſider the Operation of that Cauſe by which this natural Motion is produced. This Cauſe I here ſuppoſe, and have elſewhere ſhewn to be GOD, and indeed who elſe ſhould be the Cauſe of what is natural in us but he who is the Cauſe of our Natures. Let us ſee how how this Cauſe acts. GOD cannot act but by his Will, that's moſt certain. But now the Will of GOD is not, as in us, an Expreſſion that he receives from without himſelf, and

which accordingly carries him out from himſelf, but an inward ſelf-centring Principle, that both derives from, and terminates in himſelf. For as GOD is to himſelf his own good, his own Center and Beatifick Object, ſo the Love of GOD can be no other than the Love of himſelf. Whence it will follow, that as GOD muſt therefore be his own End, and whatever he wills or acts he muſt will and act for himſelf (as I have already repreſented it in the Diſcourſe of Divine Love) ſo alſo that the Love which is in us muſt be the Effect of that very Love which *GOD* has for himſelf, there being no other Principle in the Nature of *GOD* whereby he is ſuppoſed to act. Whence it will further follow that the natural Tendency of our Love muſt neceſſarily be to-

wards the ſame Object upon which the Love of *GOD* is turned. For ſince Love in all created Spirits is not produced but by the Will of *GOD*, which it ſelf is no other than the Love which he bears himſelf, it is impoſſible that *G O D* ſhould give a Love to any Spirit which does not naturally tend whither his own Love does. And ſince it is evident that the Term of his own Love is himſelf, it is as evident that the ſame is alſo the natural Term of ours, that as our Love comes from him, ſo it naturally tends to him, and that as he is the efficient, ſo he is alſo the true final Cauſe of the Will of Man; which I take to be nothing elſe but that continual Impreſſion whereby the Author of Nature moves him towards himſelf. Which by the way may ſerve to

furnish us with the true Reason of a very considerable Maxim which has hitherto been entertained without any, as being thought rather a first Principle than a Conclusion, I mean, that the VVill of Man cannot will Evil as evil. VVhich though a Truth witnessed by constant Experience, and such as all Men readily consent to, and acquiesce in, I despair of ever seeing rationally accounted for upon any other Supposition than the present. But according to this the Account is clear and easie. For here the VVill it self being supposed to be nothing else but that general Impression whereby *GOD*, moves us continually towards himself, it is plain that we cannot possibly will or love Evil as evil, as having no Motion from GOD towards it, but to the contrary, viz.

to himſelf who is the univerſal good. And as we may demonſtrate a *Priori* from this Impreſſion whereby *GOD* moves us towards himſelf, that we cannot love Evil as evil, ſo from the Experience we have that we cannot love Evil as evil, we may argue, as *a Poſteriori*, that our VVills are by their original Motion carried towards GOD, and that he is the true and ſole Object of their natural Tendency.

VVhich is alſo further proved by all thoſe Arguments which I have already, and may more at large produce, for our ſeeing all things in GOD as our univerſal Idea. For ſince the VVill of Man is moved only towards what the Spirit perceives, as is univerſally granted, and by Experience found to be true, and ſince as it has been

ſufficiciently proved, we perceive all things in *GOD*, who preſents to Spirits no other Idea than himſelf, who indeed is all, it plainly and neceſſarily follows that the natural Motion of our VVills is and muſt be towards GOD and him only; who having made himſelf the ſole Term and Object of our natural Love ought alſo to be made by us the ſole Object of that which is free, ſince as was laid down in the Beginning, the Determinations of our VVill that are free ought to be conformable to that which is natural.

The whole Sum and Force of this reaſoning lies in this Syllogiſm. That which is the ſole Object of our natural Love ought to be the ſole Object of that which is free. But the ſole Object of our natural Love is GOD, therefore GOD ought

ought to be the ſole Object of that which is free. The firſt of theſe Propoſitions is evident from that moral Rectitude which muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed in the natural Motions of our Love, as proceeding from the Author of our Natures, to which therefore the free Motions of it ought to be conformable. The ſecond Propoſition is that which I have profeſſedly proved, and I think ſufficiently. Wherefore I look upon the Concluſion as demonſtrated, *viz.* that *GOD* ought to be the ſole Object of our free Love, which being the only Love that falls under Command, and the only one that is in our Power, we muſt conclude that GOD requires all the Love which he can poſſibly require, and all the Love which we can poſſibly give, even our whole

Heart, Soul and Mind, which we are not therefore to divide betwixt him and the Creature, but to devote to him only, and religiouſly to preſent as a Burnt-offering intirely to be conſumed at his divine Altar. And thus the whole Motion of our Wills falls under the Right and Title of GOD, who becomes the juſt proprietary and adequate Object of them in their largeſt Capacity and utmoſt Latitude. There are but two Sorts of Motions in our Souls, as in our Bodies, natural and free, and both theſe belong of right to GOD, who has taken the greateſt Care to ſecure them to himſelf. He prevents that which is natural, and he requires that which is free. The firſt he makes his own by natural Inſtinct, the laſt by Commands, by Benefits and Obligations, by his

his own Example, by beſtowing upon us the Power to love, by directing this Love towards himſelf, and by all the Reaſon in the World. We are therefore to caſt both theſe Loves into one and the ſame Chanel, and make them both flow in one full Current towards GOD. We are to make *GOD* the only *O*bject of our Love of Choice, as he has made himſelf the only object of our natural Love, and ſo joyning this double Motion together to employ the whole Force of our Nature upon him, and love him with all our Power from whom we have all the Power that we have to love.

And how happy is that Man that can do ſo, that can thus order and regulate the *M*aſter and Leading Paſſion of his Nature, that can thus love the Lord his *GOD* with

with all his Heart, Soul and *Mind!* How to be envied is that *Man* who can thus diſingage his Affections from the Creature, who can thus recollect, fix, and ſettle his whole Love upon *GOD!* It may ſeem that he is not ſo, and if we will hearken to the fallacious Reports of our Senſes and Imaginations they will tell us that this is to enter into a dry, barren, diſconſolate and withering Condition, and will repreſent it as a State of horrible Privation, as a diſmal Solitude. But if it be a Solitude, 'tis ſuch an one as that of *Moſes* upon the holy *Mount* when he withdrew from the People to enjoy the Converſe of God, as that of our Saviour when he tells his Diſciples that they ſhould all deſert and leave him alone, and yet that he was not alone becauſe his Father was with him.

him. Happy Solitude, when the Creatures retire from us, and leave us to the more full and free Enjoyment of God, and thrice happy he that enjoys this divine Retreat, that can force the Creatures to withdraw, command their Absence, and wholly empty his Heart of their Love that it may be the more free for the Reception and Enjoyment of him who is able to fill the largest Room he can prepare for him there! How ravishing and lasting are his Delights, how solid and profound is his Peace, how full and overflowing are his Joys, how bright and lucid are the Regions of his Soul, how intire and undisturbed are his Enjoyments, what a settled Calm possesses his Breast, what a Unity of Thought, what a Singleness and Simplicity of Desire, and what a firm

firm ſtable Reſt does his Soul find when ſhe thus repoſes her full Weight upon *GOD*! How looſe and diſingaged is he from the World, and how unconcerned does he paſs along through the various Scenes and Revolutions of it, how unmoved and unaltered in all the ſeveral Changes and Chances of this mortal Life! While others are tormented with Fears, and Cares, and Jealouſies, unſatisfied Deſires, and unproſperous Attempts, while they are breaking their own and one anothers Reſts for that which when they have it will not ſuffer them to ſleep, while they are tortured with their Luſts, and with thoſe VVars which are occaſion'd by them, while they are quarrelling and contending about the things of the VVorld, hunting about after Bubbles and Sha-

Shadows, beating up and dowh after Preferments, at once climbing up and falling down from the Heighths of Honour, purſuing hard in the Chaſe of Pleaſure, all the way along complaining of Diſappointments, and yet (ſtrange Inchantment) ſtill laying in a Stock for more: In one VVord, while they are thus ſuffering the various Puniſhments of an irregular and miſplaced Affection, ſo that the whole VVorld ſeems to be like a great troubled Sea, working and foaming and raging, till all below be Storm and Tempeſt, his Breaſt in the mean while like the higher Regions of the Air enjoys a heavenly Calm, a divine Serenity, and being wholly unhinged and diſlodged from the Creature, and intirely bottomed upon another Center, upon the infinite Fulneſs and Suffi-

ficiency of *GOD*, he has no more Part in any worldly Commotions than the Inhabitants of the Air have in an earthly Earthquake, nor is any further concerned in the Afflictions of those below him, but only to wonder at their Folly, and to pity their Misery.

Then as to his moral State, must not the Life of such an one needs be as innocent and virtuous as 'tis pleasant and happy? 'Tis the Love of the Creature that is the general Temptation to Sin, and what St. *James* observes of Wars and Fightings, is as true of all other immoral Miscarriages and Disorders, that they proceed from our Lusts. And how pure and Chaste then must his Soul be that is thoroughly purged of all created Loves, and in whom the Love of *GOD* reigns absolute and unrival'd, with-

without any Mixture or Competition. How secure must he needs be from Sin, when he has not that in him which may betray him to it! The Tempter may come, but he will find nothing in him to take hold of, the World may spread round about him a poisonous Breath, but it will not hurt him, the very Cleanness of his Constitution will guard him from the Infection. He has but one Love at all in his Heart, and that is for *GOD*, and how can he that loves nothing but GOD be tempted to transgress against him, when he has nothing to separate him from him, and all that is necessary, perhaps all that is possible to unite him to him! What is there that should tempt such a Man to Sin, and what Temptation is there that he has not to incite him to all

Good-

Goodneſs, and what a wonderful Progreſs muſt he needs make in it? VVhither will not the intire Love of *GOD* carry him, and to what Degrees of Chriſtian Perfection will he not aſpire under the Conduct of ſo divine, ſo omnipotent a Principle! If Obedience be the Fruit of Love, then what an intire Obedience may we expect from ſo intire a Love, and how fruitful will this Love of *GOD* be when there are no Suckers to draw off the Nouriſhment from it, when there is no other Love to check and hinder its Growth! The Man that harbours Creatures in his Boſom, and divides his Heart betwixt GOD and them will be always in great Danger of being betrayed by them, and though he ſhould with great Care and habitual VVatchfulneſs preſerve for *GOD* a greater

Share

Share in his Affections (which is the utmoſt ſuch an one can pretend to) yet he will have ſuch a Weight conſtantly hanging upon his Soul, that he will be never able to ſoar very high, or arrive at any Excellency in Religion. But what is there on the other ſide that can hinder him who has emptied his Heart of the Creatures, and devoted it intirely to GOD from reaching the higheſt Pitch of attainable Goodneſs? How orderly then and regular will be his Thoughts, how refined and elevated his Affections, how obedient and compliant his Paſſions, how pure and ſincere his Intentions, how generous and noble his Undertakings, what a forward Zeal will he have for *GOD*'s Glory, how chearful, vigorous and conſtant will he be in his Service, with what Angelick Swiftneſs will he

perform what GOD requires of him, or whatever he thinks will be pleaſing to him, and how will he run the Way of his Commandments when his Heart is thus ſet at Liberberty! At Liberty not only from this or that particular Incumbrance, this or that Luſt or Paſſion, but from the whole Body of Sin, the intire Weight of Concupiſcence.

But Madam, while I thus ſet out the Reaſon and Advantage of the intire Love of GOD, I ſtill make further way for your Queſtion, how comes it to paſs that we are ſo backward to a Love which is both ſo reaſonable in it ſelf, and ſo pleaſant and profitable to us? You might have inlarged your Queſtion with another, ſince Men are backward, not only to pay that intire Love which they owe to GOD, but even to acknowledge the Debt,

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and are not only loath to obey the Command, but even to underſtand it, will uſe a thouſand Arts and Devices to ſhift off and evade the genuine Force of it, and rather than fail will ſay, that though GOD in the moſt plain and expreſs Terms calls for our whole Love, yet he means only a Part of it. Strange and amazing Partiality and Preſumption! But of this general Backwardneſs to receive the Senſe of this plain Command (as plain as *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me*) I have already hinted an Account in the former Part of this Letter, and as to the Backwardneſs of putting it in Practice that has been ſo excellently and fully accounted for by your better Hand that there is nothing left for mine to add upon this Part of the Subject: And indeed ſcarce upon any other. I ſhall therefore

conclude all with a very pertinent Paſſage out of one of the Prayers of St. *Auſtin*, in the 35th Chapter of his Meditations. *Reple ſemper (quæſo) Cor meum inextinguibili dilectione tui, continuâ recordatione tuâ, adeo ut ſicut Flamma urens totus ardeam in tui amoris dulcedine, quem & aquæ multæ in me nunquam poſſint extinguere. Fac me Dulciſſime Domine amare te, & deſiderio tui deponere pondus. Omnium carnalium deſideriorum, & terrenarum Concupiſcentiarum graviſſimam Sarcinam, quæ impugnant & aggravant miſeram animam meam, ut poſt te expeditè in odore unguentorum tuorum currens, uſq; ad tuæ Pulchritudinis Viſionem efficaciter ſatiandus merear pervenire. Duo enim Amores, alter bonus, alter malus, alter dulcis, alter amarus, non ſe ſimul in uno capiunt pectore, & ideo ſi quis præter te aliud diligit, non eſt Charitas tua Deus, in eo.*

eo. *Amor dulcedinis & Dulcedo amoris, Amor non crucians ſed delectans, Amor ſincere caſte què permanens in ſæculum ſæculi, Amor qui ſemper ardes & nunquam extingueris, dulcis Chriſte, bone Jeſu, Charitas Deus meus, accende me totum igne tuo, amore tui, Suavitate & Dulcedine tuâ, Jucunditate & exultatione tuâ, voluptate & concupiſcentiâ tuâ, quæ ſancta eſt & bona, caſta & munda, tranquilla eſt & ſecura, ut totus dulcedine amoris tui plenus, totus Flammâ Charitatis tuæ ſuccenſus, diligam te Deum meum ex toto Corde meo, totisquè medullis præcordiorum meorum, habens te in Corde, in Ore, & præ Oculis meis, ſemper & ubiquè, ita utnullus pateat in me locus adulterinis Amoribus.*

Fill always (I beſeech thee) my Heart with an unquenchable Love of thee, with a continual Remembrance of thee, that ſo as a burning Flame, I

may burn all over in the Sweetneſs of thy Love, which may not be quenched even by many Waters. Make me ſweeteſt Lord to love thee, and through the Deſire of thee to lay down the Weight of all carnal Deſires, and the moſt heavy load of earthly Concupiſcences, which fight againſt and weigh down my miſerable Soul, ſo that running expeditely after thee in the Odor of thy Ointments, I may be worthy to arrive to the effectually ſatisfying Viſion of thy Beauty. For two Loves, one good and another bad, one ſweet and another bitter cannot dwell together in the ſame Breaſt, and therefore if any one love any thing beſides thee, thy Love O God is not in him. O Love of Sweetneſs, O Sweetneſs of Love, that doſt not torment but delight, Love that for ever remaineſt ſincere and chaſt, Love that does always burn and art never extinct,

extinct, ſweet Chriſt, good Jeſus, my God, my Love, kindle me all over with thy Fire, with the Love of thee, with thy Sweetneſs, with thy Joy, with thy Pleaſure and Concupiſcence, which is holy and good, chaſte and clean, quiet and ſecure, that being all full of the Sweetneſs of thy Love, all on fire with the Flame of thy Charity, I may love thee my GOD with my whole Heart, and with all the Power of my inward Parts, having thee in my Heart, in my Mouth, and before my Eyes, always and every where, that ſo there may be no Place in me open to adulterous Loves.

You ſee Madam, that St. *Auſtin* here moſt expreſly prays for the very ſame thing for which I argue, the moſt intire Love of *GOD*, and

who is there that can juſtly ſcruple to ſay *Amen* to this Divine Prayer of his? I for my own Part aſſent to it moſt heartily, and ſo beſeeching the holy Spirit, the great Diſpenſer of Charity, to ſhed this intire Love of GOD into the Hearts of you and me, and all good people; that ſo we may love him as a GOD, with a Love truly worthy of him, I leave you to the Correction of theſe my Thoughts, and to the Enjoyment of your own; which whether you will further communicate upon this Subject, that ſo the ſame Hand may conclude which begun it, I leave you to conſider, while I juſtly thank you for the Advantage of your paſt Correſpondence, and aſſure you that I cannot ex-

expreſs how very much I am thereby obliged to continue

Madam,

Benerton, May 25. Your moſt faithful Friend

and humble Servant

J. NORRIS.

Your Definition of Pleaſure is right as far as it goes, but that is no further than what we call a nominal Definition.

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LETTER XI.

To Mr. Norris.

SIR,

THough I intimated in my last that I had concluded my Meditations on this Subject, yet I find like its divine Object it has no Bounds. And besides the natural Vastness of the Argument, your convincing and pathetick Discourses so rouze my Understanding, so chafe my Affections and enlarge my Thoughts, that I have once more resumed this noble, this pleasing, this perfective Theme, which is the Solace of my Heart, the Entertainment, not only of my Leisure, but of my most busie and best employ-

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ed Houſs. For what have we to do, what is it that deſerves to be the Buſineſs of rational Creatures but to adore and love their Maker? It were not worth while to live in the World, were it not to love GOD and pay our Devoirs to him; and could the Atheiſts mad Hypotheſis poſſibly be true, our greateſt Wiſdom wou'd be with all Expedition to haſten out of it.

But though the Account you give of the Love of GOD be ſo accurate and entertaining, yet I don't in the leaſt wonder that you comprehend this ſacred Theory ſo fully, and explain it ſo efficaciouſly, ſince the great Evidence of divine Love has aſſured us that he will manifeſt himſelf to them that love him; they ſhall ſee him, whilſt the blind World has no Viſion of his Beauty; they only can declare the Sweetneſs

neſs of this hidden Manna, who taſte and feed on and are intimately acquainted with it.

Nor need you wonder at my Prolixity which you are pleaſed to encourage and commend, becauſe it is an Evidence that whatever my Underſtanding be, my Will is right, and though I am very ſenſible the one is too defective to deſerve Commendations for its Notions, yet you are pleaſed to overlook its Imperfections on account of the Honeſty and Regularity of the other. Love you know is talkative, as its Thoughts are ever buſied in contemplating, ſo is its Tongue in diſplaying the Beauties of its Object; it wou'd have all the World admire that which it doats on, and every thing he ſees or hears ſerves to excite the dear Idea in a Lovers Mind. This we may obſerve

ſerve when the Object is finite, and perhaps unworthy of our Choice, and well may the Obſervation hold when our Hearts are united to infinite Perfection, when all the beauteous things that ſurround us are but faint Shadows of our Beloved's Excellencies, when our Loftieſt Praiſes are no better than Detractions, and the higheſt Pitch of Love we can poſſibly ſkrew up our Souls unto, infinitely unworthy of him, were it poſſible to offer more. When therefore in my ſolitary Muſings I entertain my ſelf with theſe agreeable Contemplations, I fancy the whole intellectual World is offering up it ſelf a flaming Sacrifice to GOD, and that there is no Contention among intelligent Beings but who ſhall with greateſt Ardor love, praiſe, and ſerve the glorious Author of their Hap-

Happineſs! Whatever it is, I am ſure it ought to be ſo: For who can forbear to admire Beauty when plainly repreſented to his Eye? Or to be raviſhed with harmonious Numbers when they briskly ſtrike his Ear? Who is ſo dull as not to deſire what is lovely, and reliſh what is good? Why then is he not affected, nay, why is he not tranſported when careſſed by *all* that is good, and *all* that is lovely! When the Fruition of Beauty, and Harmony, and Goodneſs in the Abſtract are offered to him? Why we ſhould with-hold our Hearts from GOD, when it is not more our Duty than our Intereſt and Happineſs to offer them to him, I confeſs I cannot yet diſcern. And though much has been ſaid to account for this Abſurdity, yet I muſt needs own it ſtill employs my Wonder.

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For why ſhould even our Affections oppoſe the Love of *GOD*, ſince it does not deprive them of any real good, why ſhould they not rather cloſe with it, ſince its only Deſign is to ſatisfie and perfect them? Our very lower Appetites will find more true Satisfaction in the Service of *GOD* and Reaſon, than in their own irregular and exorbitant Sway. Sure I am that a Man may be much happier by withdrawing his Heart from the Creature than he can be in cleaving to it. Nay, (let it look never ſo much like a Paradox) 'tis impoſſible for him to be in any Degree happy, whilſt miſplaced Affections do ſo far prevail as to denominate him an irregular Lover and wicked Man. So true is that ſaying I have ſomewhere met with, that there is no Joy but in GOD, and no Sorrow but

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in an evil Conſcience. But admitting the Creature were able to entertain us, what wiſe Man wou'd think much to relinquiſh a leſſer for a greater good, or ſhew any Inclination for lower Delights when courted to the Enjoyment of the higheſt? Why then do we reliſh any other Pleaſure? Since there is as much Difference betwixt this and all other Delights, as between the Quinteſſence and the *Fæces*, the kindly Work of Nature, and the preternatural Operations of Medicine? Other Loves, even the very beſt, have ſomewhat of Groſſneſs in them which offends even whilſt they pleaſe, and have always their Pleaſure mixed with Pain; whereas Divine Love is ſo connatural to the true Taſte and Reliſh of the Soul, that although the Sentiments it excites are highly raviſhing and en-

entertaining, though they fill every Faculty with a full Tide of Joy, they are withal ſo pure and undiſturbing that they are Sweets that know no Bitter, Joys without Allay, Pleaſures that have no Sting, ſuch as I would fain deſcribe, but that I am not Miſtris of Eloquence enough to expreſs them. But whatever it be in which a Man finds the greateſt Delight, let him abſtract from it all that is uneaſie and diſguſting, let him double and treble the Joy, let his working Fancy exalt it to the utmoſt Heighth, and perhaps it may afford him ſome faint Idea of this delightful Love, which yet Experience will convince him falls as ſhort of it as artificial Fruits do of the natural and true. All which does only encreaſe my wonder why there are ſo few Votaries to this only real Bliſs! For

why a Man ſhou'd reject his Happineſs is a Queſtion we can never anſwer, but that he does, is what we daily ſee. Well then may it repent GOD that he has made Man, ſince Man has made himſelf ſuch an abſurd, irrational Creature! Well may the Divine Goodneſs paſſionately exclaim, *O that they were wiſe! O that there were ſuch an Heart in them*, ſince 'tis impoſſible, even to an Almighty Power to make him happy who is reſolved he will not be ſo. And herein methinks appears the Devil's greateſt Maſterpiece, that he can give ſuch a falſe Repreſentation of things, and ſo much to our Diſadvantage as to put us upon the violent Purſuit of good where we can never find it, and to blind us ſo that we may not diſcern it where it is, and our own moſt notorious Folly in being ſo wretch-

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edly impoſed on by him. For certainly the Ways of Vice are as toilſome and uneaſie as they are fooliſh and abſurd; they are not only unprofitable but unpleaſant too, the Conſideration of which is the reaſon why I was ſo deſirous of a Definition of Pleaſure from your accurate Pen. For Pleaſure as I take it is the grand Motive to Action, and after all the Thoughts I have employed about the matter, I am not able to conceive how there can be any ſuch thing as Pleaſure in ought but Virtue, nor conſequently what Inducement to any other Courſe: 'Tis as irrational to look for Pleaſure from eccentrick Actions, as to expect Harmony from an Inſtrument unſtrung and out of tune. As therefore the Love of GOD is the Sum of our Duty, ſo by conſequence 'tis the Heighth of our Plea-

ſure, the Joy of the whole Man; and were we not ſtrange unaccountable Creatures, it wou'd be the Buſineſs of our Lives, the End of all our Actions. I will not therefore ſearch for Arguments to enforce this Love, after thoſe incomparable ones you have ſo well inculcated, which are indeed unanſwerable, and not to be oppoſed by any thing but that which is as unconquerable as 'tis unaccountable, wilful Folly, for if we are reſolved not to practiſe, the Wonder is the leſs that we are averſe to admit the Truth of this Theory. Certain it is, would we but make the Tryal, our own Experience would ſuperſede the Trouble of Diſpute. The Fruition of ſo perfect and all-ſufficient a Being, wou'd convince us that he who is altogether and infinitely lovely is worthy of all our Love. For

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after all the Arguments we can urge, after all the Swaſives we can offer, there is none like to that of the Pſalmiſt, *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is gracious!* Wou'd we but open our Souls wide to receive his Influences, we ſhou'd need no more Conviction that 'tis he, and he only who can repleniſh and contentthem, and therefore 'tis he only who ought to poſſeſs them. And were I writing to the World, to Perſons not ſenſible of their Obligations, I wou'd deſire them only to open their Eyes, to fix their Thoughts ſteddily on the Divine Beauty, and then tell me if there be any thing fit to rival him, or if that Creature be worthy of his Love who can divide the leaſt Grain of his Affections from him, or can diſcern Amability in any thing beſides him? I wou'd intreat them if they will not

be active in kindling this Divine Fire, to be passive at least, not to skreen themselves from his Beams, nor put a wilful Bar to exclude the natural Operations of his Excellencies (for this stubborn Will of Man, weak as he is, does often check Omnipotence) and then let me ask them if they do not feel the Rays of his Goodness sweetly insinuating into every Part, clearing up the Darkness of their Understandings, warming their benummed Affections, regulating their oblique Motions, and melting down their obstinate, ingrateful, disingenuous Wills? Do they not feel these Cords of a Man as himself is pleased to call them, these silken Bands of Love, these odoriferous Perfumes drawing them after him, uniting them to him by the most potent Charms? Can they any longer

ger refrain from crying out, Thou haſt overcome, O Lord thou haſt overcome, ride on triumphantly, lead my Soul in Triumph as thy own Captive, thy Love has conquered and I am thine intirely and for ever. And bleſſed is the Man that is ſo overcome! He never lived till now, nor knew what Pleaſure meant; ſome Shews of it might tantalize and abuſe him, but now he is delivered from that Enchantment, and has free Acceſs to the Ocean of Delight, he may now take full Draughts of Bliſs, without fear of want or Danger of Satiety! He may---- what ſhall I ſay? He may be as happy as his Nature will permit, and has nothing to hinder him from being infinitely ſo, but that he is finite and a Creature!

And now if our happy Man be so sensible of his Bliss, that he is desirous by all means to confirm and secure it; I know no better way than by frequently contemplating the infinite Loveliness and Love of *GOD*. For as it was this that begat Love, so this must preserve and continue it, nor is it possible it should ever go out so long as he supplies it with this Fuel. And if for the greater Security of his Happiness, and that he may not deceive himself in a matter of so vast Importance, since most Men will take it very ill to have it said that they are not Lovers of *GOD*, and yet there are but few who really are so, if on this Consideration he be inquisitive after the genuine Properties of Divine Love, (besides what has already more lossely been hinted at,) the great comprehensive and inseparable

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Effect of it is univerſal Obedience, as I intimated in my laſt. But to be more particular; a flaming Love to *GOD* will create the greateſt Indifference imaginable towards the World and all things therein. For ſince all thoſe Tyes are broke that glewed us to it, we are no longer moved or affected by it. I need not tell you Sir, that a paſſionate Lover is careleſs to all things but the Object of his Deſire; if that ſmile, no matter who frowns on him. Thoſe Objects which other Perſons purſue with Eagerneſs, enjoy with Complacency and loſe with Regret, are unmoving and cold to him, he is not ſenſible of their Charms, nor are the Avenues of his Soul open to any thing but what he loves. Other things he beholds at a diſtance, they may ſlightly touch and paſs away, but cannot pene-

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trate. But where-ever his Beloved is intereſſed his Soul is all on fire, he does not purſue his Service with a languid and frozen Application, but with the Diligence and Zeal of Love. He will not for the petty Intereſts that ſelf propoſes, connive at the Injuries that are offered to his better ſelf. He will not ſee his Beloved affronted, his Laws contemned, and his Deſigns oppoſed, and tamely ſtand by and hold his Peace; nor does he regard what himſelf may ſuffer, but only what Service he can reaſonably hope to do; and never is chary of any of thoſe things we uſually call our own, whether Fortune, or Fame, or Life it ſelf, but only deliberates how he may reſerve them for the moſt opportune Seaſon of expending them freely in his Beloveds Service. There's nothing bitter and

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uneaſie in Love, the greateſt Labours are Delights, for what ſo grateful to a Lover as the Difficulty of a Service, becauſe it eminently recommends that Paſſion which could ſurmount it? On which account Love by making Religion our Buſineſs and Intereſt, our Joy and Pleaſure, takes off that Uneaſineſs, which though really we do not find we however fancy to be in it, by viewing it only in the unpleaſant Proſpect of mere Task and Duty.

Again, Love cuts off all narrow and illiberal Thoughts, gives the moſt genteel and generous Temper to the Soul, it extinguiſhes all Jealouſies and Suſpitions, tormenting Cares and deſponding Fears; it has a Salve for every croſs Event, and a Sagacity to read *GOD*'s Kindneſs in ſuch Providences as are vulgar-

garly reſolved into his Diſpleaſure. Hence it is the Parent of the moſt intire Reſignation, and exact Conformity. A true Lover neither queſtions GOD's Revelations nor diſputes his Commands, deliberates no further than to obtain a good Aſſurance that ſuch and ſuch things are really his Will and Pleaſure. He does not only ſubmit to his Diſpenſations how diſagreeable ſoever to Fleſh and Blood and his own Expectation; this a Man muſt of neceſſity do, and therefore I cannot diſcern wherein the Virtue of a bare Submiſſion conſiſts, ſuch a paſſive Obedience to GOD is like the new Notion ſome have got of paſſive Obedience to their Governors, a being content to ſuffer when we know not how to help it; but our Divine Amoriſt has an intire Complacency in whatever *GOD* al-

allots, he in a manner goes forth to meet it, chuſes, juſtifies, and rejoyces in it.

But I muſt not omit what the holy Scripture makes a peculiar Character and ſpecial Effect of Divine Love, and that is the Love of our Neighbour. That it *is ſo* needs no Proof, being expreſly affirmed by our Lord himſelf and his beloved Diſciple, let us inquire a little into the Reaſon *why* it is ſo, which ſeems to be this. GOD by the Prerogative of his Nature, his infinite Beneficence and Love to us, having a Right to all our Love, whether it be Love of Deſire or Love of Benevolence, but withal, being no proper Object of the latter, by reaſon of his infinite Fulneſs, has therefore thought fit to devolve all his Right to that Love on our Neighbour, and to require

as ſtrict a Payment of it to his Proxy, as if he were capable of receiving it himſelf. By this Notion we may fairly underſtand St. *John*'s reaſoning in his *1ſt. Epiſt. Chap.* 4. 20. a Text which thoſe Expoſitors that I have met with give methinks but a crude Interpretation of. And beſides, the Love of *GOD* preſſing us to ſuch an exact Imitation of him (as I ſhewed in my laſt) and GOD being in nothing more imitable than in his Charity and Communicativeneſs, our Love to him will require us to tranſcribe this moſt lovely Pattern, and to do all the good we can to thoſe whom he is conſtantly purſuing with his Benefits.

It likewiſe teaches us the true Meaſure of Benevolence, which is to beſtow the greateſt Share of our Love on thoſe who are deareſt to GOD and do moſt reſemble him:

I cannot forbear to reckon it an irregular Affection, and an Effect of Vitious Self-love, to love any Perſon merely on account of his Relation to us. All other Motives being equal, this may be allowed to weigh down the Scale; but certainly no Man is the better in himſelf for being akin to me, and nothing but an overweaning Opinion of my ſelf can induce me to think ſo. I ſhould therefore chuſe to derive the Reaſons why we are in the firſt place to regard our Relations, rather from Juſtice, and the Rules of Oeconomy, than from Love. For ſince the Abilities of Man are finite and determinate, and he cannot univerſally extend any Act of Benevolence but Prayers and Wiſhes, 'tis therefore reaſonable he ſhould begin to communicate his Benefits to thoſe within his own

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Verge and Diſtrict, whoſe Wants he is beſt acquainted with, and can moſt conveniently ſupply; whoſe Benefits to him are preſumed to require this Return, or elſe their Neceſſities beſpeak him the fitteſt Author of their Relief.

I further obſerve, that Reſignation and Charity are the Teſts by which GOD explores every Man's Love. By the one he tries the proſperous, by the other the afflicted. He therefore who has this Worlds good, and with-holds his Aſſiſtance from his Brother who needs it; and he who becauſe he has not the good things of this World murmurs and grudges at their Diſpenſation, and envies them that have, cannot be ſaid to have the Love of *GOD* in him.

In the laſt place, a true Lover of GOD is always conſiſtent with himſelf, one Part of his Life does not claſh and diſagree with the other. He that has many Loves, has by conſequence many Ends; whence it is that we too often ſee many who in the main are good People, laſh out into ſome particular Irregularity, which like a Fly in a Box of Oyntment, marrs the Sweetneſs, and deſtroys the Lovelineſs of their Virtue, and brings a Reproach on Religion it ſelf. The vulgar and Men of carnal Appetites partly out of Ignorance, and partly to lighten as they fancy their own Crimes, being too prone to reflect that Daſh of ſecular Intereſt, that time-ſerving or over-great Solicitude for the World, or perhaps their too great Opinion of themſelves, or Cenſoriouſneſs on

others, which zealous Pretenders to Piety are ſometimes apt to ſlip into, even on that unblemiſhed Beauty, whoſe Livery they wear, which I am ſure gives no Allowance to ſuch unſuitable Mixtures, however her Votaries happen to admit them, But when we act by this one grand Principle, the Love of *GOD*, our Lives are uniform and regular wherein the great Beauty of Piety conſiſts. For I am apt to think that be Mens Pretences what they will, that Life only is truly religious which is all of a Piece; when a Man having deliberately bottomed on well-choſen and ſolid Principles, without Fear or Favour acts conſtantly and ſteddily according to them.

To conclude, this Divine Love is the Seal of our Adoption, the Earneſt

Earneſt of the Spirit in our Hearts, it being impoſſible that the Soul that truly loves GOD ſhould ever fail of enjoying him. 'Tis the Antipaſt of our Happineſs here, and the full Conſummation of it hereafter. Thrice happy Soul that canſt look through the Veil, and notwithſtanding that thick Cloud of Creatures that obſcures thy View, diſcern him that is inviſible, live in the Light of his Countenance all the Time of thy ſojourning here, and at laſt pure and defecate, with a Kiſs of thy Beloved, breath out thy ſelf into his ſacred Boſom!

And now Sir I have done; for what have I further to add, ſince I cannot ſufficiently expreſs how much I think my ſelf obliged to you? As for all your other

Favours, so particularly that you give me Occasion to declare my self

Worthy Sir,

Your most unfeigned Friend,

June 21. 1694.

As well as humble Servant.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

Two Letters by way of Review.

To Mr. Norris.

YOu'll wonder Sir, that I look back upon a finiſhed Subject, but becauſe you have in theſe Letters anſwered moſt of the Objections that are made againſt your printed Diſcourſe, and becauſe I am very deſirous your Hypotheſis ſhould appear in its full Light, though in my firſt I conceded one of the main things you contend for, *viz. That GOD is the only efficient Cauſe of all our Senſation*; yet ſince very many object

againſt this Propoſition, and ſomething has offered it ſelf to my Thoughts, perhaps not altogether Impertinent, give me leave to examine the matter a little furrher. And methinks the main Streſs of the Objections lies in theſe two Points. Firſt, That this Theory renders a great Part of GOD's Workmanſhip vain and uſeleſs. Secondly, That it does not well comport with his Majeſty.

For the firſt, That this Theory renders a great Part of *GOD*'s Workmanſhip vain and uſeleſs, it may be thus argued. Allowing that Senſation is only in the Soul, that there is nothing in Body but Magnitude, Figure and Motion, and that being without Thought it ſelf it is not able to produce it in us, and therefore thoſe Senſations, whether of Pleaſure or Pain, which

we feel at the Preſence of Bodies, muſt be produced by ſome higher Cauſe than they; yet if the Objects of our Senſes have no natural Efficiency towards the producing of thoſe Senſations which we feel at their Preſence, if they ſerve no further than as poſitive and arbitrary Conditions to determine the Action of the true and proper Cauſe, if they have nothing in their own Nature to qualifie them to be inſtrumental to the Production of ſuch and ſuch Senſations, but that if *GOD* ſhould ſo pleaſe (the Nature of the things notwithſtanding) we might as well feel Cold at the preſence of fire as of water, and heat at the Application of Water or any other Creature, and ſince *GOD* may as well excite Senſations in our Souls without theſe poſitive Conditions as with them, to what

end do they ſerve? And then what becomes of that acknowledged Truth that *GOD* does nothing in vain, when ſuch Variety of Objects as our Senſes are exerciſed about are wholly unneceſſary? Why therefore may there not be a *ſenſible Congruity* between thoſe Powers of the Soul that are employed in Senſation, and thoſe Objects which occaſion it? Analogous to that vital Congruity which your Friend Dr. *More* (*Immor. of the Soul*, *B.* 11. *Chap.* 14. *S.* 8.) will have to be between ſome certain Modifications of Matter, and the plaſtick Part of the Soul, which Notion he illuſtrates by that Pleaſure which the preceptive Part of the Soul (as he calls it) is affected with by good Muſick or delicious Viands, as I do this of *ſenſible* by his of *vital Congruity*, and methinks they are ſo ſym-

ſymbolical that if the one be admitted the other may. For as the Soul forſakes her Body when this vital Congruity fails, ſo when this ſenſible Congruity is wanting, as in the Caſe of Blindneſs, Deafneſs, or the Palſie, &c. the Soul has no Senſation of Colours, Sounds, Heat and the like, ſo that although Bodies make the ſame Impreſſion that they uſed to do on her Body, yet whilſt it is under this Indiſpoſition, ſhe has not that Sentiment of Pleaſure or Pain which uſed to accompany that Impreſſion, and therefore though there be no ſuch thing as Senſation in Bodies, yet why may there not be a *Congruity* in them by their Preſence to draw forth ſuch Senſations in the Soul? Eſpecially ſince in the next place, it ſeems more agreeable to the Majeſty of GOD, and that Order

Order he has eſtabliſhed in the World, to ſay that he produces our Senſations *mediately* by his Servant Nature, than to affirm that he does it *immediately* by his own Almighty Power.

Nor will this be any Prejudice to the Drift of your Diſcourſe, which is to prove that *GOD* only is to be loved becauſe he only does us good, for the Creature has as little Right to our Affections this way as the other. If a bountiful Perſon gives me Money to provide my ſelf Neceſſaries, my Gratitude ſurely is not due to the Money but to the kind Hand that beſtowed it, to whom I am as much obliged as if he had gone with me and bought them himſelf. For there ſeems no Neceſſity to conclude that every thing that does me good, that is, that produces Pleaſure in me, though it

be

be but the contemptible Pleaſure of a grateful Odor, has on that account a juſt Title to ſome Portion of my Love, ſince in ſome Caſes the occaſioning a moral and durable Good does not neceſſarily challenge our Love. As for Inſtance, my Enemy does me very much good by his greateſt Injuries and moſt virulent Reproaches, becauſe he gives Opportunity of exerciſing my Charity, and makes ſuch a Diſcovery of my Faults, that thereby I come to know and amend them. But I ſuppoſe you won't ſay I am obliged to him for all this, or that I ought to deſire thoſe Injuries, or admit him to my Boſom who offers them? Though perhaps my deareſt Friend could not poſſibly do me a greater good. We do not therefore owe Love to any Obje& merely on account of *what* it produces, but in Pro-

Proportion to that voluntary Kindneſs *whereby* it produceth it. Agreeably to what you ſay in your firſt Letter concerning Pain, that *GOD* occaſions it only indirectly and by Accident, it is not his antecedent and primary Deſign, he does not will it from within, or for it ſelf, but from without, and therefore for theſe Reaſons is not the Object of our Averſion. And ſo ſay I, allowing that Bodies did really better our Condition, that they did contribute to our Happineſs or Miſery, and did in ſome Senſe produce our Pleaſure or Pain, yet ſince they do not *will* it, do not act voluntarily but mechanically, and all the Power they have of affecting us proceeds intirely from the Will and good Pleaſure of a ſuperior Nature, whoſe Inſtruments they are, and without whoſe Bleſ-

Bleſſing and Concurrence they could not act, therefore they are not proper Objects of our Love or Fear, which ought wholly and intirely to be referred to him, who freely acts upon our Souls, and does us good by theſe involuntary and neceſſary Inſtruments.

For certainly that Being only deſerves our Love, even our *whole* Love, who has it always in his Power to better and perfect our Nature, and who does voluntarily and freely exert that Power. Which former Clauſe I add to cut off our Love from all rational Creatures, who may be inſtrumental to our good deſignedly and freely, but ſince their Power is not originally from themſelves, neither are they always in a Capacity of exerting it, ſeeing they *may*, and very

very often *do*, want either Power or Will to help us, therefore they are not the proper Objects of our Love. For that Being only is ſo who conſtantly and chuſingly pleaſures and perfects our Natures, or at leaſt is always ready to do ſo, and actually does it, when not prevented and hindered by our Indiſpoſitions and wilful Incapacities.

Theſe Sir, are at preſent my Thoughts, though haſtily huddled up, for I had but a few Hours to examine and digeſt them, and was not willing to remain any longer in your Debt for this Letter, having treſpaſſed too much already. And I am confident you are ſuch an unfeigned Lover of Truth, that you will on that Account eaſily pardon her Boldneſs in objecting thus

thus freely againſt your ingenious Diſcourſe, who is with all Reſpect and Gratitude

Your faithful Friend

Aug. 14. and Servant.

Mr.

Mr. Norris's *Anſwer.*

Madam,

YOU are no leſs happy in this your *Review* than in your firſt *Overture* to pitch upon the only material Objection to which the Propoſition you attack is liable. But before I ſet my ſelf to anſwer it, give me leave to ſuggeſt to you that 'tis a Propoſition of the moſt inconteſtable and philoſophick Evidence, and in the Diſcourſe you refer to moſt clearly demonſtrated to be ſo, that the Bodies that are about us are not the true Cauſes of thoſe Senſations which we feel at their Preſence, but that GOD only is the Cauſe of them, who being the Author of our Beings has the ſole

ſole Power to act upon our Spirits, and to give them new Modification. I ſay *Modifications*, for that well expreſſes the general Nature of Senſation. And it is a new Modification or different Way of exiſting of the Soul that makes this or that Senſation, which is not any thing really diſtinct from the Soul, but the Soul it ſelf exiſting after ſuch a certain Manner. Wherein it is diſtinguiſhed from our *Idea's*, which are repreſentative to us of ſomething without us, whereas our Senſations are within us, and indeed no otherwiſe diſtinct from us than Modalities are for the thing modified. Accordingly there is a vaſt Difference between knowing by *Sentiment* and knowing by *Idea*. We know Numbers, Extenſion, and Geometrick Figures by Idea, but we know

Pleaſure and Pain, Heat and Colour, &c. by interior Sentiment. To know Numbers and Figures there is need of Ideas, for without an Idea the Soul can have no Perception of any thing diſtinct from it ſelf, as Numbers and Figures are. But to know or perceive Grief there is no need of an Idea to repreſent it. A Modality of the Soul is ſufficient, it being certain that Grief is no other than a Modification of the Soul, who when in Grief does not perceive it as a thing without and diſtinct from her ſelf (as when ſhe contemplates a Square or a Triangle) but as a different Manner of her own Exiſtence. Senſation then being a Modification of the Soul, this ſingle Conſideration ſetting aſide all other Diſcourſings will furniſh us with a demonſtrative Argument

to

to prove that not Bodies, but *GOD* alone is the Cauſe of our Senſations. For who elſe ſhould either have Power or Knowledge to new modifie our Beings, but he who made them and perfectly underſtands them? But I ſhall not enter upon a further Demonſtration of this Point, ſince I have abundantly proved it in my printed Diſcourſe of the Love of *GOD*, and ſince you do as good as allow it in your preſent Objection. This therefore appearing to be a clear and certain Truth, give me leave again to remind you of a certain Maxim that I obſerved to you in my firſt Letter, That *we are to ſtick to what we clearly ſee, notwithſtanding any Objections that may be brought againſt it, and not reject what is evident for the ſake of what is obſcure.* Suppoſing therefore that there are, or

might be Objections raiſed to ſhew that *GOD* is not the Cauſe of our Senſations which I could not anſwer, yet ſince my Reaſon as often as I conſult her does moſt convincingly aſſure me that he is, I ought to reſt here, and not ſuffer that which I do not perceive, to hinder me from aſſenting to that which I evidently do.

But to conſider your Objections, I obſerve in the firſt place that having granted that ſenſation is only in the ſoul, that there is nothing in Body but Magnitude, Figure and Motion, and that being without Thought it ſelf it is not able to produce it in us, and therefore thoſe ſenſations, whether of Pleaſure or Pain which we feel at the Preſence of Bodies, muſt be produced by ſome higher Cauſe than they (all which well agrees with the Concluſion

cluſion I contend for) you afterterwards object againſt their being only Conditions ſerving to determine the Action of the true and proper Cauſe, which Objection ſeems to come a little unexpectedly after ſuch a Conceſſion. For if they are not true and proper Cauſes of our ſenſations, what elſe can they be but Conditions ſerving to determine the Agency of him who is ſo? Yes, you ſeem to point out a middle Way, by ſuppoſing that as they are not ſo much as proper Cauſes, ſo they are more than mere Conditions, *viz. That they have a natural Efficacy towards the Production of our Senſations.* But if I am not mightily miſtaken this middle Way will fall in with one of the Extreams. For to have a natural Efficacy for the Production of a thing, is the ſame as to have a Cauſality,

ſality, and that again is the ſame as to be (at leaſt a partial) Cauſe. If therefore the Objects of our Senſes be not true and proper Cauſes of our Senſations, then neither have they any natural Efficacy towards the Production of them. But if they have any ſuch natural Efficacy, then they are true and proper Cauſes, which though it be a Propoſition which you formally and expreſly deny, is that however which your Objection in the true Conſequence and Reſult of it tends to prove. And to prove this, That Bodies have a natural Efficacy towards the Production of our Senſations, or that they are true Cauſes of them (for I take them to be Propoſitions of an equivalent Import) you argue from a twofold Topick, firſt, That the contrary Theory renders a great Part of

GOD's

GOD's Workmanſhip vain and uſeleſs. Secondly, That it does not well comport with his Majeſty. Now to ſet you right in this matter, and to acquit our Theory from both theſe very threatning Inconveniences, we need only fairly propoſe it. The Caſe then is this. GOD has united my Soul to a certain Portion of organized Matter, which therefore for the particular Relation it has to me I call my Body. This Body of mine is placed among and ſurrounded with a vaſt Number and Variety of other Bodies. Theſe other Bodies according to the Laws of Motion eſtabliſhed in the World ſtrike variouſly upon mine, and make different Impreſſions upon it according to the Degree of their Motion, and the Difference of their Size and Figure. Theſe Impreſſions have a dif-

ſality, and that again is the ſame as to be (at leaſt a partial) Cauſe. If therefore the Objects of our Senſes be not true and proper Cauſes of our Senſations, then neither have they any natural Efficacy towards the Production of them. But if they have any ſuch natural Efficacy, then they are true and proper Cauſes, which though it be a Propoſition which you formally and expreſly deny, is that however which your Objection in the true Conſequence and Reſult of it tends to prove. And to prove this, That Bodies have a natural Efficacy towards the Production of our Senſations, or that they are true Cauſes of them (for I take them to be Propoſitions of an equivalent Import) you argue from a twofold Topick, firſt, That the contrary Theory renders a great Part of

GOD's

GOD's Workmanſhip vain and uſeleſs. Secondly, That it does not well comport with his Majeſty. Now to ſet you right in this matter, and to acquit our Theory from both theſe very threatning Inconveniences, we need only fairly propoſe it. The Caſe then is this. GOD has united my Soul to a certain Portion of organized Matter, which therefore for the particular Relation it has to me I call my Body. This Body of mine is placed among and ſurrounded with a vaſt Number and Variety of other Bodies. Theſe other Bodies according to the Laws of Motion eſtabliſhed in the World ſtrike variouſly upon mine, and make different Impreſſions uponit according to the Degree of their Motion, and the Difference of their Size and Figure. Theſe Impreſſions have a dif-

ferent Effect upon my Body, ſome of them tending to the Good and Preſervation, and ſome to the Evil and Diſſolution of its Structure and Mechaniſm, even as in the greater World ſome Motions tend to the Generation and Perfection, and others to the Corruption and Deſtruction of natural Bodies. Now though it be not neceſſary that my Soul ſhould know what is done to other Bodies, yet for the good of the animal Life it is very neceſſary ſhe ſhould know what paſſes in her own, whether ſuch or ſuch Impreſſions make for its good or hurt. Now there are but two Ways for this, *Light* and *Sentiment*. My Soul muſt know this either by conſidering and examining the Nature of other Bodies, the inward Configuration of their Parts, the Difference of their Bulk and external

nal Figure, the Degree of their Motion, and withal the Relation that all theſe bear to the Configuration of her own Body, or by having ſome different Sentiment raiſed in her according to the Difference of the Impreſſion, or in clearer Terms, by being differently modified her ſelf, according as the Modification of her Body is altered by the Incurſion of other Bodies. The firſt of theſe Ways, beſides that it would employ and ingage the Soul which was made for the Contemplation and Love of *GOD* (her true and only good) in things altogether unworthy of her Application, is withal, conſidering the Narrowneſs of our Faculties and the frequent Return of ſuch Occaſions, not only infinitely tedious, painful and diſtracting, but utterly impracticable. For after all if I were not to take away

away my Hand from the Fire till I had entered into the Philoſophy of it, examined the Figure and Motion of its little Particles, and conſidered the ſeveral Relations they had to the Configuration of my Body, I ſhould be burnt before I had a quarter ended my Speculation. It is neceſſary therefore that there ſhould be a quicker and a ſhorter Way of advertizing the Soul of the ſeveral Relations that other Bodies bear to her own, and of the Conveniency or Diſconveniency of their Impreſſions. Which can be only by a ſuitable Sentiment either of Pleaſure or Pain accor ding as the Impreſſion happens to be. But this is an Advertiſement I muſt in vain expect from Bodies. They can give me no Intelligence of what even themſelves do to me. They can indeed change the Situation of the Parts of my Body, but they

they cannot give any Sentiment to my Mind, or new modifie my Soul. *GOD* only is able to do this, and accordingly being willing that I ſhould know the Relations that other Bodies bear to mine with as little Trouble as may be, (it being not fit that a Soul made for the Contemplation of an infinite Good, ſhould be occupied and taken up with anxious Diſquiſitions about Bodies) he leaves it not to my Reaſon to explore and ſift out the Congruities or Diſcongruities of other Bodies with mine (which would not only be a laborious, but after all a very fallacious and uncertain Way) but in Wiſdom thinks fit to go another way to work, and to give me due Information of theſe things by the ſhort inconteſtable Proof of *Sentiment*. And becauſe Pleaſure and Pain are the natural Marks of Phy-

Phyſical good and evil, and withal the ſtrongeſt and moſt quickning Motives to incline me to ſeek or ſhun the Uſe of Bodies, accordingly theſe are the two general Senſations he raiſes in my Soul according as the Impreſſions are which are made upon my Body. Thus for Inſtance, when the Motion of the Fire is moderate and temperate upon my Body, and ſerves only to open and ſupple its Parts, to quicken my Blood, and to cheriſh and recreate my Spirits, I feel a Sentiment of Pleaſure. But when it comes to be intemperate ſo as to indanger the Rupture of any of its Fibres, I feel a contrary ſentiment of Pain, which admoniſhes me of the imminent Evil, and in a Language that even Children and Idiots underſtand, bids me remove my ſelf at a greater Diſtance. And all this

this with a great deal of Reaſon. For though there be nothing in the Motions themſelves reſembling thoſe ſenſations which attend them, and though the Motion which occaſions Pleaſure differ only in Degree from that which occaſions Pain (which by the way is a plain Argument that thoſe Motions do not properly cauſe or produce thoſe ſenſations) yet ſince as far as they reſpect the Preſervation of the Machine, and the good of the Bodily Life or State they differ eſſentially, or in their whole Kind, it is fit they ſhould be attended with ſenſations eſſentially different, ſuch as Pleaſure and Pain, which therefore *GOD* raiſes in the ſoul in Conſequence of thoſe general Laws of Union which he has eſtabliſhed between it and the Body, touching it as it ought to be touched in relation

tion to the Difference of ſenſible Objects. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of which Conduct we can never ſufficiently meditate upon or admire.

And now Madam, I can no ſooner ſuppoſe you to have gone over in your Thoughts this account concerning the Manner of ſenſation, than to have formed within your ſelf a ſatisfactory ſolution of the Difficulties you propoſe. For though theſe ſenſible Objects are not the true Cauſes of thoſe Senſations which we feel in our Souls upon the Impreſſions they make in our Bodies, but only Conditions determining the Agency of the true Cauſe, yet it does by no means follow from hence that therefore they *ſerve for nothing*, and are *wholly unneceſſary*. No, the contrary appears from the Account before given.

For

For though theſe Objects do not act upon our Spirits, or truly and properly ſpeaking, produce any ſenſation there, yet they do really make an Impreſſion upon our Bodies, and according to the different Meaſure or Manner of that Impreſſion miniſter to *GOD* (the true efficient) an apt and proper Occaſion to act upon our ſpirits, and ſo in this reſpect are not merely poſitive and arbitrary Conditions. 'Tis true indeed if by poſitive and arbitrary Conditions you mean that there is no real Analogy or neceſſary Connexion, abſtracting from all Will or Conſtitution of GOD about it, between ſuch Impreſſions and ſuch ſenſations, ſo they are mere poſitive and arbitrary Conditions. For moſt aſſuredly there is nothing in thoſe Motions that either anſwers the following ſenſations, or naturally

rally and neceſſarily infers them. But if by poſitive and arbitrary Conditions you mean that there is no greater Reaſon why *GOD* in Conſideration of the Welfare of the Body ſhould give the Soul ſuch a Sentiment, rather than another upon ſuch an Impreſſion, ſo they are not mere poſitive and arbitrary Conditions. For though that Motion which is followed with Pleaſure, has no Phyſical Analogy with Pleaſure, as differing only in Degree from that which is followed with Pain (whereas Pleaſure and Pain differ eſſentially) and ſo though *GOD* might if he pleaſed exchange ſenſations, giving me ſuppoſe, a ſentiment of Pain, when the Motion of the Fire is temperate, and according to the preſent Order of things ought to be followed with a ſentiment of Pleaſure, and ſo likewiſe

wiſe giving me a ſentiment of Pleaſure when the Motion of the Fire is intemperate, and ſo according to the preſent Eſtabliſhment ought to be followed with a ſentiment of Pain, I ſay though he might thus tranſpoſe our ſenſations for any Phyſical Proportion or Connexion that is between them and their reſpective Motions, yet in regard to the good State of the Body it is not ſo fit and reaſonable that he ſhould, as is obvious to conceive. And this is all the *ſenſible Congruity* I can allow you. For in ſhort, if by ſenſible Congruity you mean only, that conſidering the Good or Evil that arrives to the State of the Body from ſuch an Impreſſion there is an antecedent Aptneſs or Reaſon in the thing why GOD ſhould touch the Soul with ſuch or ſuch a Sentiment rather than with its contrary, I rea-

dily acknowledge that there is ſuch a ſenſible Congruity. But if by ſenſible Congruity you mean (as you ſeem to do) that there is any natural ſimilitude or Proportion between ſuch an Impreſſion and ſuch a ſentiment as to the things themſelves, or that by virtue of this Analogy ſuch an Impreſſion has any natural Efficacy to produce, or (in your Language) to *draw forth* ſuch a ſentiment, in this ſenſe I deny that there is any ſuch thing as a ſenſible Congruity, that is, I deny that ſenſible Objects have any ſuch Congruity with our ſenſations as to be able to contribute any thing by way of a Phyſical Efficiency towards the Production of them. No not ſo much as by way of *Inſtruments*. For even Inſtruments belong to the Order of efficient Cauſes, though they are leſs principal ones, and 'tis moſt con-

certain that GOD has no need of any, ſince his Will is efficacious of it ſelf. If therefore this be meant by ſenſible Congruity that the Objects of our ſenſes have any real Part or Share in the Production of our ſenſations, though it be only in an *inſtrumental* Way, I utterly diſclaim it as an abſurd and unphiloſophical Prejudice, and that without any Danger of rendring the Workmanſhip of *GOD* vain or unneceſſary, that Inconvenience being ſufficiently ſalved by the firſt kind of ſenſible Congruity, as you may eaſily perceive.

This Madam, I think gives full Satisfaction to your firſt Inſtance. As to your ſecond, That it ſeems more agreeable to the Majeſty of *GOD* to ſay that he produces our ſenſations mediately by his ſervant Nature, than to affirm that he does

it immediately by his own Almighty Power, I reply briefly, First, That Arguments from the Majesty of *GOD* signifie no more here against *GOD*'s being the immediate Author of our sensations than in the old *Epicurean* Objection against Providence. And indeed they seem both to be built upon the same popular Prejudice and wrong Apprehension concerning the Nature of the Deity, as if it were a Trouble to him to concern himself with his Creation. If it were not beneath the Grandeur and Majesty of *GOD* to create the World *immediately*, neither is it so to govern it, and if his greatness will permit him to order and direct the Motions of *Matter*, much more will it to act upon and give sentiments to our Spirits, though with his own immediate Hand, which is necessary to hold

and

and govern the World which it has made. For, after all, ſecondly, we have no reaſon to think it beneath the Majeſty of *GOD* to do that himſelf which can be done by none but himſelf. Which as I have ſufficiently ſhewn to be the Caſe in reference to our Senſations, ſo I doubt not but that if you carefully read over Mr. *Malebranch, Touchant l' efficace attribuée aux Cauſes ſeconds*, you will find to hold as true as to all things elſe. I mean that GOD is the only true efficient Cauſe, and that his *Servant Nature* is but a mere Chimera.

As to what you ſay laſtly, That the Suppoſition of Bodies having an immediate Cauſality in the Production of our Senſations will be no Prejudice to the Drift of my Diſcourſe, *the intire Love of GOD*, becauſe of the mechanical and involuntary

voluntary Way of their Operation, I do not know whether this Suppoſition will be ſo harmleſs or no. But this I am ſure of that the ſafeſt Way to bar the Creatures from all Pretenſions to my Love, is to deny that I have any of my Senſations from them, or that I am beholden to them for the leaſt Melioration or Perfection of my Being. And beſides, if we ſhould once allow them in a true and Phyſical Senſe to cauſe our Senſations, I am inclined to think that this may juſtly be uſed as an Argument *a Poſteriori*, to prove that they do not do it ſo mechanically and involuntarily as you repreſent it, but rather knowingly and deſignedly, ſince it is impoſſible that any thing but a *thinking Principle* ſhould be productive of any *Thought*, as all Senſation certainly is.

And

And thus Madam I have endeavoured to give you the beſt Satisfaction I can upon this great and noble, but much neglected Argument, and ſhall think my ſelf very happy and ſufficiently rewarded if by the Pains I have beſtowed I may deſerve the Title of

Madam,

Your ſincere Friend

and humble Servant

J. NORRIS.

Bemerton, Sept. 21.

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